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ABSTRACT

This reader on literacy provides a clear account of the major perspectives on literacy and adult education through 20 papers divided into three categories. An introduction provides an overview of the content of the papers. Part 1, "Issues," contains seven papers: "Literacy: Access to Power" (Dijkstra); "Development and the Possibilities for Literacy" (Ooijens); "Can We Work Literacy into Every Context of Development in Developing Countries?" (Shrivastava); "Can Literacy Work Lead to a Critical Consciousness?" (Hammink); "Beyond Literacy" (Barik); "Do We Need Separate Literacy Courses for Women?" (van Dijk); and "Teach Literacy in the First or Second Language?" (Tholen). Part 2, "Applications," consists of nine papers: "Literacy Crash Course: An Experiment with Tribal Women" (Shrivastava); "Amidst the Jungle of the Simipal Hills" (Barik); "The Income Project on Education" (Kumar); "Literacy in Rural Areas: TRICON Associates" (Banerjee); "Literacy in Zimbabwe: Problems and Limitations" (Chombo); "English Literacy: A Unions' Project in South Africa" (Mavuso); "The Literacy Work of CEPROD (Development Studies and Promotion Center)" (Galindo, Barahona); "Technical Training for Women: The Work of INCATEM (Institute of Technical Training for Women)" (Escobar); and "Literacy of Women in Peru" (Dasso). Part 3, "Requirements," contains four papers: "Supporting Literacy for Development" (Dubbeldam); "Limitations and Problems of Literacy Work from a Donor's Point of View" (Monteiro); "Limitations and Problems for Literacy Campaigns with Respect to Support and Prerequisites for Support" (de Vries); and "Education for All" (Storm et al.). Appendixes include an 83-item bibliography, an index, and brief biographies of authors. (YLB)

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and then... they write for the first time

Robert Aspeslagh
Jannie van den Berg
(eds.)

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Robert Aspeslagh
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Humanistic Institute for Development Cooperation

Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'

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Preface

Our aim in this reader on literacy is to provide a clear account of the major perspectives on literacy and adult education. Such an objective cannot be attained without the cooperation of others.

We are grateful to the National Commission for Development Cooperation and the Steering Party of the International Literacy Year for their financial support which made it possible to invite those contributing to this reader to a conference at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', and to participate in the literacy activities of various local organizations of the Humanistic Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS). Both institutes have attached much importance to this year, 1990, declared International Literacy Year by the United Nations. We would also like to thank the authors of this reader for their cooperation in promptly sending their contributions after their stay in the Netherlands.

The writing of this book has not only involved a great deal of close cooperation between the editors, but also the assistance of Karin van Egmond and Sandra Vogelsang, which was indispensable in preparing it for publication. Moreover, the help of Laurie Nesbitt with respect to both interpretating and translations into English was essential.

Introduction

People who can neither read nor write are doomed to function as second-rate citizens. They are poorly equipped to use their rights and have limited access to knowledge that might enable them to improve their situation. Quite often their position is even worse: illiterates are powerless against abuse and exploitation whereas modernizing processes affect them only negatively. In short, they are hopelessly caught in the vicious circle of deprivation and poverty. Thus they hamper the development of the countries in which they live. Illiteracy is one of the main obstacles to economic progress and democratization, particularly in third-world countries, where the percentage of illiteracy is considerably higher (over 50% in Africa) than in industrialized countries.

So literacy is an important condition for reaching a certain level of development, both socially and individually. The most obvious way to promote this seems to be the implementation of a large-scale literacy campaign, but this approach has only proved effective in a number of very limited situations. Generally speaking, far too many participants drop out, the main reason for which is the lack of any real perspective of improvement of their situation. The main handicap in these literacy campaigns is that they see learning to read and write as aims in themselves, whereas actually there is more at stake: developing a society and gaining access to power in all social sectors. Or, as Jaap Dijkstra puts it in his contribution: 'The redistribution of knowledge must be accompanied by a redistribution of income, land, civil rights and power'.

Most governments, however, are not prepared to further the transfer of political and economic power to the poorest. Their literacy campaigns will practically always be aimed at integrating the participants in the existing balance of power. But even in a country as Zimbabwe, where education is seen as a basic right, government literacy campaigns were unattainable because other priorities ranked higher due to limited means, as appears from Ignatius Chombo's article. National governments are not the right institutions to determine content and approach of these campaigns, this is better left to non-governmental organizations.

In order to be able to make a serious effort at development, literacy programmes must be fully integrated into a more general development project. This means that the content of a literacy programme has to suit the requirements of the more general

project. This direct link is an important motivational factor in the participants' learning process.

However, such development programmes, with an integrated literacy component, cannot be dropped at random in a country. First of all one has to gain a clear understanding of the possibilities of a region and of the wishes and potential of the future participants.

How programmes must be built up and which factors have to be taken into account is discussed in Jan Ooijens' and Om Shrivastava's contributions. They argue that literacy programmes must be developed from the perspective of adult participants and that their knowledge and experience must be exploited. This goes for planning, organization, administration and evaluation of a programme and for the writing of curricula, the production and distribution of materials and for follow-up activities.

Even within fully integrated literacy programmes there is always the risk of conformation. One learns to function within a limited field and the programme does not aim at active participation in society. To achieve the latter a critical awareness has to be developed which enables people to understand their situation and makes them realize that it can be changed, as Freire puts it in his theory. For the concrete activities which must implement such a change a commonly accepted aim (e.g. the aim of the development programme) and a certain measure of democracy are prerequisites. When a group of people combines these aspects - learning together, self organization and joint action - we can speak of 'popular education', an activity which has become widespread in South America. But is popular education possible at all times and in any country? Kees Hammink is rather doubtful about this in his article.

Activities within popular education projects tend to be widely divergent, because specific conditions, certain common interests and the wishes and potential of the participants are equally taken into account. This is also expressed in the project reports of the contributors. CEPROD in Honduras for instance concentrates on wage increase and preventive health care in rural areas, Delia Galindo and Laura Barahona tell us. For the women's organization PERU-MUJER, about which we read in Elizabeth Dasso's contribution, literacy within the framework of the improvement of the legal status of women is central. Incatem, the organization for which Emilse Escobar works, combines literacy programmes for women especially with organization building and skills like weaving.

Organizations can also limit themselves to a particular area of popular education, like the production of learning and teaching materials. This is what TRICON does, the organization that Samir Banerjee is involved with. In all situations creativity seems indispensable. Om Shrivastava's description of crash courses for women

supports this view. Recurring frustrations have to be coped with everywhere, as appears from the case Satyabrata Barik presents.

Yet there are numerous problems that are shared by most organizations. One of them is the language problem in literacy courses: the potential participants speak a language that is not the national language. In which language must they learn to read and write and in which language will the course be taught? On a practical level these problems will be solved depending on the availability of suitable tutors and the existence of a script in the participants' language. Important political aspects like cultural identity, economic improvement and access to power play an important part in opting for the first or the second language. Bastiane Tholen gives content to these criteria in the Dutch situation.

Literacy programmes can only succeed when they are closely tied up with the daily reality of participants' lives. An integral part of this is the language they speak. For this reason literacy programmes must be taught in the native language of the participants. This is one argument of those in favor of native language literacy programmes. Another argument is that knowledge that is taught in people's own language reinforces their cultural identity; thus they learn how to defend themselves against domineering external influences.

One can also argue in favor of literacy programmes being taught in the national language. The most obvious advantage is that participants are thus enabled to gain information about the plans and arguments of their rulers and can address them directly. This is how the ELP in South Africa argue, about which we can read in Buso Mavuso's contribution.

Another frequently mentioned problem is the implementation of literacy courses for women. Far more women are illiterate than men, 35% of the total female world population is illiterate. Women are seriously hampered in their efforts to take an active part in society, to fight for their rights and to improve their situation. Their children suffer as well, as women still are largely responsible for the well-being of the family and the upbringing of the next generation.

Special attention will have to be paid to women in a way that takes into account their status in various roles and circumstances. Women not only have different barriers to cross than men, but heir experience of the world, their daily routine and their learning needs are different as well. Also women very often do not manifest themselves in mixed groups. Do women need separate literacy courses? Fie van Dijk thinks they do and she supports this view in her contribution.

There are still many questions to be answered and problems to be solved in areas other than 'second language' or 'women'. More research, mutual support and exchange of experience are badly needed indeed.

Donor organizations can lend a helping hand in these fields too. Leo Dubbeldam points out various possibilities in his article.

Next Manuela Monteiro shows us the other side of the picture, elaborating on the stipulations made by donor organizations when they take it on themselves to support literacy programmes. There will still be a big demand for literacy programmes alas in the next few years. The attention paid to the problem of illiteracy in the framework of The International Literacy Year must be seen as the beginning of a long road that has still to be covered, the end of which will come into sight when elementary education does no longer produce illiterates. Jan de Vries maintains that the experience gained in adult literacy programmes can be very helpful in realizing this aim.

Apart from this, adults will have to be enabled to gain essential new knowledge and skills in a developing society. Only then will the basic right of Education for All be fulfilled.

Robert Aspeslagh

Jannie van den Berg

PART ONE

ISSUES

Literacy: access to power

Jaap Dijkstra

There is an old saying: knowledge is power. That ancient wisdom has lost none of its truth. But the reverse is also true. The lack of knowledge, the inability to acquire knowledge, means impotence in a world where power over information is increasingly closely linked with political and economic power.

We're talking about illiteracy: not being able to read and write or - in the broader United Nations definition - the inability to read or write and comprehend a short, simple text about everyday life. For over 900 million people on this planet - one in four people over the age of 15 - that is the daily reality. The real figure is quite probably much higher, particularly if we employ a less formal definition. That is, if by illiteracy we mean 'functional' or 'social' illiteracy: having an insufficient grasp of reading, writing and arithmetic skills to deal with one's social environment. It is no coincidence that illiteracy is most common among socially marginal groups, among people who are in a socio-economically and culturally disadvantaged position. This is true of countries in the south, but it is no less true of the north.

Today we shall not, in fact, be talking about a problem particular to the Third World. In the Netherlands of today, illiteracy has by no means been eliminated. We don't have exact figures. Estimates vary between 500,000 and 1 million people out of a population of 14 million. That is a staggering number, in any case, and almost inconceivable in a so-called advanced and modern society such as ours. Once again, the highest percentages can be found among groups which are already in a difficult social position: ethnic minorities, inhabitants of aging urban districts, young people, not to mention women.

Consequences of illiteracy

What are the consequences of illiteracy:

— impotence; it excludes large groups of people from full participation in society and thereby confirms the continuation of the 'status quo';
— illiteracy on a global scale results from poverty and under-development and forms an obstacle to progress and development;
— illiteracy keeps people in a situation where they are dependent, lacking autonomy, without rights and living in insecurity.

Over the past 30 years large-scale campaigns devoted to the techniques of reading and writing failed to have much impact. Mass literacy campaigns of this kind have proved to have at best a temporary effect. The direct social environment of those taking part remains unchanged and continues to produce new groups of illiterates.

Along with many others, we are convinced that literacy campaigns can only hope to succeed if, at the same time, they can also offer illiterate people improved socio-economic and cultural perspectives. Investments need to be made not just in education but also in socio-economic development. The redistribution of knowledge must be accompanied by a redistribution of income, land, civil rights and power. In short, access to power for marginal groups around the world. This has been the main theme of our policy in the Third World for some time now: access to power.

Everybody literate is change

I'd like to end with a quote from a true humanist, the Norwegian economist Johan Galtung:

> 'What would happen if the whole world became literate? Answer: not so very much, for the world is by and large structured in such a way that it is capable of absorbing the impact. But if the whole world consisted of literate, autonomous, critical, constructive people capable of translating ideas into action - individually or collectively - the world would change.'

Development and the possibilities for literacy

Jan Ooijens

Since the end of the 1950's, there has been a marked change in the field of adult education and literacy. In reaction to the so-called traditional literacy programmes of the fifties, during the sixties the idea of functional literacy was stressed, or what is commonly known today as problem-oriented literacy. Here I will briefly attempt to sketch the origins of functional literacy and the possibilities for literacy programmes in the rural areas of Latin America.

The search for functionality

Traditional programmes of adult education, which continue to be offered by most countries' ministries of education, almost always involve massive literacy campaigns and primary education programmes for adults. The teaching methods are generally very similar to those used in basic education for children, though certain adaptations have been made. The programmes are developed outside the adults' - their physical, socio-economic and cultural context. There is no coordination with other development activities. The main goal of these traditional adult literacy programmes is to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to the adult who has not had the opportunity to attend school. Literacy was and is considered to be an end in itself. In reaction to the experiences of the traditional mass literacy campaigns, to many development workers' criticism of the traditional approach and to the overall lack of motivation of the adults in the mass campaigns of literacy, the search began in the sixties for a new type of literacy. One saw the need to develop more 'functional' programmes.

The functional approach to adult education, including literacy, means literacy oriented to the environment of the adult and attempts to adapt teaching programmes to the socio-economic problems of the adult's real world. The programmes not only target the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Adult education should have a broader focus. Someone stressed that 'literacy, far from being an end in itself, should be seen as a way to prepare man for the performance of a social, civic and economic role that widely overcomes the limits of rudimentary literacy, restricted merely to teaching reading and writing.'

The most important of the new ideas are the conscientisation approach of Paolo Freire, and the work-oriented literacy approach of Maguerez (see next page).

Freire and Maguerez

The following is a brief comparison of the approaches of Freire and Maguerez and their underlying principles.

Aspects	Marguerez' approach	Freire's approach
notion of development	economical	socio-political
goal of development	economic growth/modernisation	emancipation: socio-political and economic liberation
emphasis in training and formation	professional training and the teaching of knowledge and skills	political conscientisation and the creation of insight
importance of basic study	of great importance	of great importance
understanding of reality	enterprise	total situation of the human being
role of the population being studied	within the research?	joining actively in the research
participation	participation as a means	participation as a goal
nature of the process of communication	discussions within the group	dialogue
contents of dialogue	discussion/solving a problem	analysis of reality and identification of other existing problems
type of instructor	familiar with situation	familiar with situation
role of instructor	essential: possesses knowledge	equal with the participants within discussion

The interpretation of these points and realization of programmes with these approaches are very different and relate to the underlying notion of development, such as Freire's idea of 'liberation', and Maguerez' 'modernization.'

Both influenced thefunctional literacy approach of the Experimental World Literacy Programme of the UNESCO (EWLP), which was initiated after the World Congress of Education Ministries to Eradicate Illiteracy, held in Teheran in 1965.

The creation of the EWLP

In one of the recommendations of the World Congress of Teheran, it is specifically stated that 'every literacy operation for adults has to be conceived as an integral part of the development plan of a country, linked with professional, social and cultural formation.' Also, 'duly development-oriented literacy must be an integral part not only of every educational national plan, but of development plans and projects in every sector of the country.' The EWLP was created to generate a more development-oriented methodology of literacy. In the UNESCO approach of the sixties one emphasized the concept of modernisation and economic development and the central point was selectivity: all conformed to the strong economic interpretation of development at that time.

Since 1970, basic changes can be observed in the general global view of development. There was criticism of the economic and modernisation view which had prevailed up to that time in considering development strategies. The gap between the Third World and wealthier countries had only widened. The integrational nature of development and the necessary participation of the people in the search for solutions was now emphasised.

In 1972 the concept of functionality in literacy and adult education was extended by participants of the UNESCO-Seminar in Havana:

> 'Functional adult education is that which, founded on the relationship between man and work (taking the word work in its broadest sense) and linking the development of the working individual with the general development of the community, reconciles the interests of the individual with those of society. Functional education therefore is that in which the individual fulfills himself within the framework of a society whose structures and whose superstructural relations facilitate the full development of human personality.'

Thus, it helps to produce an individual who is the creator of material and spiritual wealth while at the same time allowing him unrestricted enjoyment of his creative work. 'Viewed in this way, functional adult education is, to a great extent, the aspiration of educators throughout the world who are concerned with the effectiveness of their work. Its application and efficiency are hampered when there is no supportive relationship between the so-called sub-systems of a particular society, whereas they are considerably facilitated when sub-systems are harmoniously

intertwined and lend one another mutual support' (UNESCO 1972: 18). At the Third World Conference on Adult Education, organised in Tokyo (1972) this interpretation was repeated.

A broader interpretation of the concept of functionality was also defended at the Third Conference on Adult Education held in Tokyo (1972), the International Symposium for Literacy held in Perspepolis (1975) and the International Conference on Adult Education organised under the auspices of the International Council on Adult Education (ICAE) in Dar-Es-Salaam (1976).

It is now generally accepted that the concept of functionality should be extended to all its dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural. Just as development is not only economic growth, literacy, and more generally adult education, should, above all, tend to awaken a critical awareness in the individual of the social reality and allow men and women to understand and change their destiny (Perspepolis 1976). The final declaration of the symposium in Perspepolis was a clear step in the direction of what was called 'alfabetización para la liberación.' Adult education had to create the conditions for the acquisition of a critical understanding of the contradictions within society and, moreover, of one's own initiative, and stimulate participation.

It was also during the seventies that international organisations began promoting the concepts of basic needs and Integrated Rural Development (IRD). In the international conferences and seminars on Adult Education and Literacy, some aspects of these strategies also received greater attention. The importance of coordination, the idea of basic needs, the importance of a genuine and indigenous development based upon the people's concrete situation and including participation began to be stressed. There were parallel developments in the Popular Education programmes that were strongly influenced by the experiences of literacy programmes inspired by Freire's approach.

Some principles for adult education

If the adult education process is to respond appropriately to the people's needs, there must be good coordination with the development agencies working in the region: both during the basic study and the implementation of the educational programme.

If actions are not already coordinated, adult education, because of its integral and communicative nature, may well become the coordinating element for the various agents that are facilitating development and change in a given region. It can be said that adult education (including literacy) should be an integrated global process of multiple formation, developed as a function of life and of differing needs: a diversified educational process that aims to make adults conscious, active and efficient components within production and development in general.

Both in content and form, educational programmes must adapt to the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the area, and to its particular characteristics and concrete possibilities. In order to create genuine educational content and to ensure a better acceptance of the programmes in the communities, the population's participation in preparation is indispensable. This principle is valid not only for literacy programmes, but for other development projects as well, since it makes it easier for those responsible for literacy programmes to adapt their programmes to other development activities.

Given existing circumstances, there cannot be a homogeneous adult education that is uniform for all. Programmes, methods and materials should be diversified in the sense that they should be drawn up after identification of the problems of a human group, and adapted to concrete real situations. Adult education should be a sort of 'education tailored to development objectives and people's needs and made up with full participation of the adults.'

Adult education should be creative and should use techniques adapted to local situations and current needs. This means giving up a priori centralised programming, along with reading primers and other teaching materials that are made up in an office and spread all over the country. It is an individual's concrete situation which provides specialists with the elements necessary to define the content and methods for integral personal development. Special attention has to be given to the training of the instructors, so that they can continually adapt the programme to the circumstances of the adults.

In order for an educational programme to be truly functional, it is indispensable that a basic study be carried out of the region where the programme is to be implemented. Only a thorough knowledge of the objectives and development structure, and the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of the life of future participants, can adapt the programme to their problems and desires and, therefore, contribute to change.

Adult education is no longer the sole responsibility of teachers and ministry of education officials, but of technicians of development agencies and of the people themselves. They should all play an essential role in adult education programmes.

Within the educational process, great emphasis has been given to the method by which the students are to acquire knowledge. Adult experience and intuition are stressed as a starting point for learning. From this principle comes the importance of dialogue during educational meetings, and student participation in the design and implementation of the educational programme.

Adult education should function in such a way that the various fields of educational action are interrelated and become a single process. It is a total educational action in which the tools of reading, writing and arithmetic are only one aspect.

Possibilities of literacy programmes

Today stimulating adult literacy is, essentially, related to two thoughts.

First that adult education is the foundation for a democratic development. It gives the population access to information and provides it with the tools to speak up for itself. Adult education broadens one's horizons and invites active participation in social processes.

Secondly, illiteracy is an important obstacle for development. Although the relation between illiteracy and prosperity is not clear, literacy is thought to be essential for both the development of modern society and for the liberation of the individual. In other words, adult education is one of the possible instruments for economic, social, political and cultural development.

In my opinion, programmes of adult literacy can be executed in virtually every context. As has been indicated, a central issue to a programme of adult education is its functionality. Therefore the potential and success of a programme depends, to a great extent, on the circumstances in which it is realized.

In the following I will first describe some factors related to the performance of the educational institution itself which lead to poor integration into the environment and thereby limit the number and type of participants. Next, I will draw attention to what I will call some contextual factors that can influence participation in adult literacy programmes in rural areas of Latin America: the socio-economic, cultural and political obstacles in the environment. Concerning the importance of an integrated approach in literacy, I will comment on the difficult coordination between different development institutions.

The performance of the educational agent

Central questions in drafting the content of a functional education programme are: 'Who decides what the programme is?', and 'Who determines the order of importance of the problems to be addressed?' This could be personnel of the educational institutions (with different levels of decision-making power), representatives of development agencies (often with little knowledge of the environment and with proposals that contradict those of other agencies working in the same sector) or, last but certainly not least, the community representatives and the population. In the case of the latter, knowledge about the socio-economic and political environment is of crucial importance: 'Do the representatives really defend the interests of the community, especially those of the poorest sector?'

One must never forget that in carrying out programmes that take into account the daily situations and problems of people, the participation of the beneficiaries is essential. in realizing this, one can design a balanced set of educational subjects.

Every project must pay attention to promoting its programme in the community (among other things, through the basic study). This cannot be limited, as happens with many literacy programmes, to just one promotional visit to a community meeting to explain the plans to be implemented. It is also necessary to confer at length with the community leaders in order to clarify the meaning of the education projects and their advantage to the community. Likewise, the position of promoters and/or instructors is not made clear and the position of the leaders themselves is not sufficiently investigated beforehand. Good promotion means that the people have a thorough knowledge of the fact that the educational programmes stem from the community's problems, and that their participation in the preparation of the programmes is a basic prerequisite.

Even where basic research for the programmes has been carried out, the importance of these studies has not always been sufficiently acknowledged. In many programmes, the educational meetings start even before the initial studies of the environment have been completed.

In many educational programmes, environmental surveys are not made because standardized programmes are used for the whole country. Or one carries out a very limited investigation of the environment. The population is only required to fill out a list of what they would like, and the teams then analyze it in terms of specialties, and determine how they can fulfill these wishes using programmes that are already established within their agencies. Teams design a profile within which programmes must be carried out. In reality, this only serves as a guideline, since the main criteria are the specialties of the team members.

Since many development technicians do not live in the communities and may only pay sporadic visits, it is not easy to determine the problems of the population concerned. It is advisable for the literacy promoters to have frequent contact with the communities, and preferably to live in them. Above all it is preferable to work with native instructors of the region. For a correct execution of the programme, one must give practical courses to instructors, in which they are taught how to carry out promotion in the communities, how to motivate people, how to carry out a simple social study and how to adapt the content of the programmes to the specific circumstances of his community.

A lot of programmes tend to use the National Reader of Literacy (optimum standardization), which is understandable since the ultimate authority of a lot of programmes is the National Director of Literacy Programmes and this is less expensive for the national authorities. However, this totally contradicts the principles of functional literacy. And, it is therefore not surprising that interest in these programmes is limited. Besides, given certain circumstances there is no need to be able to read and write. It is interesting to note that in many programmes there is interest in arithmetic, because it directly meets the daily needs of the people.

In elaborating the form and organisation of literacy projects, it is customary for officials to work with a pre-established model which is quite difficult to adapt. We must also remember that it would be ideal for the benefited community to have the last word, in close cooperation, of course, with the technicians. It is my experience that in some educational programmes the officials do not take into consideration the agricultural calendar, the peak work periods, or periods of frequent emigration for work in other regions. It is not uncommon for the instructor to teach the generative word 'crop,' while the farmers are sowing. This points to a lack of integration in the daily activities of the farmers.

The socio-economic context and programme participation

Experience shows us that adult education, including literacy, is more efficient and development potential itself is greater, if adults actively participate in an integrated development programme designed to alter the difficult position in which they find themselves. Processes of change, or socio-economic and cultural development actions from which future participants feel that they will benefit, are known to stimulate participation.

The presence of physical and social change factors (such as new production means and the right to use them, as well as other change factors like cooperative movement, health programmes, productive projects for both sexes, etc.) force individuals into a new kind of relationship with the environment, initiating a change in their cultural universe and motivating them towards further development. Following this premise I would like to note that there are several environmental factors that hinder or influence the realization of literacy programmes in general, and of development-oriented programmes in particular.

The motivation to participate is partly determined by the existing educational situation in the community or area where the project is to be implemented. If the level of education of the population is relatively high, the reading, writing and arithmetic skills could become the prevailing group standard, which could urge individuals to participate in an educational programme. Sometimes an impetus for adults to participate is the fact that their children participate in the existing educational infrastructure. Before implementing an educational project one should know if any provision of reading materials exists, and, more importantly, what the actual purpose of these basic skills should be. An obvious need for literacy within a society, however, will always be the principal incentive.

In this context one must be aware of the strong ethno-centric views that organisers of these programmes sometimes display concerning the motivation to participate. In western societies, people who do not master reading and writing skills

are constantly confronted with this 'handicap.' It is not uncommon for these experiences to also be considered valid for less modernised non-western societies, in which literacy takes on a different degree of importance, or plays no role at all.

Adults from the poorest strata of society, who never had the chance to engage in educational activities as children, are forced to work long days in order to support their families. This obviously prevents them from participating in an educational project on a regular basis. The result is a high percentage of absenteeism and dropouts. A lot of small farmers and/or people who have no land are, as a result of their difficult economic position, forced to look for work elsewhere. It is understandable therefore, that these people are characterized by a considerable geographic mobility and that their participation in educational meetings and the systematic treatment of certain topics is greatly complicated if not impossible. This type of migration also has its effects on the participation of women who, because of the absence of their husbands, fathers or relatives, are confronted with extra productive tasks and do not, therefore, have time to participate in any course or educational activity.

Various elements of the cultural system have a direct impact on the course taken by literacy projects. In this context I would specifically like to mention the existing mistrust regarding people considered to be outsiders, the fear of integration into national society, the problems with language in a bilingual environment and the unequal possibilities for men and women.

Educational programmes linked with other development projects or integrated with specific extension activities are also hampered by various factors. The contributions of rural extension programmes and related literacy projects are closely connected to potential agricultural improvements and the application of acquired skills in society. One must be aware of the fact that information or, for that matter, education alone will not alter local circumstances. Independent of the need for information about new agricultural techniques applicable to the ecological conditions of the regions, it is important to be able to apply them in an economic sense; that is to say, that they be consistent with the peasant's economic situation, which is after all the main target of the programme.

Therefore, it is advisable to study the productive reality of peasants. This refers not only to the ownership of land and the regulation of access to water, but also to the availability of credit at reasonable interest rates for buying the needed inputs, as well as marketing possibilities. Strictly speaking, indispensable resources such as water, credits and extension are accessible to all people and are not related to the aspect of land ownership. In reality, however, the distribution of different services can be characterized by its 'landlord bias' and discrimination toward peasants. The insecure market situation has a negative influence on many peasants in improving or changing their production. Under circumstances in which adequate price guarantees are missing, the peasants have to turn to intermediaries. For this reason peasants prefer to stick to traditional crops which offer more security for their own sustenance. In order to protect themselves against the practices of intermediaries, peasants sometimes switch to the creation of cooperatives. It is interesting, however, that several studies have shown that peasants possessing little or no land participate less in cooperatives than peasants that possess considerable amounts of land and/or other resources. Their obligation to make enormous capital investments discourages peasants to join the cooperative. They often prefer not to run any risks and doubt that they possess the required skills, experience and knowledge.

Moreover, the question must be asked whether literacy projects related to rural extension programmes can be called functional if these are executed in situations in which the application of the acquired knowledge is not possible. In many programmes little attention is paid to institutions that are important for agricultural development and also to the organizational component of the peasants. On the other hand, one has to be careful with programmes directed only to strengthening the organization of, for example, peasant movements if, at the same time, the creation of productive projects is forgotten.

In order to participate in certain functional literacy programmes it is sometimes necessary for people to have certain resources, such as land, money and time. Peasants, for whom investments are very risky generally first come to look at what is happening. At a later stage, however, when the programme starts to produce for those participating, they decide, understandably, not to participate in the programme because they do not have enough resources and because they are afraid. This fear is based on previous experiences of participating with the richer members of the community. 'The big fish eats the smaller one,' said a peasant in one Latin American community. They think that the cost of improvement or change will always somehow fall unfairly on the back of the poorest sector of the community.

The lack of (financial) resources is also a considerable problem in programmes that are not directly concerned with the improvement of agriculture. Even the purchase of required materials such as cloth for a sewing course, wood for a carpentry course or needles for healthcare courses can be a prohibitive problem.

Working as an educator in a community with a certain political and social-economic power structure means that the work cannot be neutral. To take the side of the most exploited and implement certain activities which induce change would incite resistance from other groups with competing interests, especially when the project stresses basic problems.

If a development project affects the economic interests of leading groups or individuals, there is a good chance that they will try to negatively alter the course of the project by spreading rumours about the project, by not attending meetings or refusing credits to participants, by boycotting production, manipulating the market or even by repression of participants. Numerous examples in Latin America can be given. The resistance of influential persons is not always only based on their economic interests. Sometimes the objectives of the project or simply the underlying approach provokes resistance to projects. A clear example of this is the resistance of sects in engaging in projects.

Socio-political relations, such as godfatherhood or patronage, can prevent people from getting closer to the educational body. The programmes must take into consideration existing power relations. Communities have been wrongly considered homogeneous. It must look for the support of the more influential people to protect the programme, but obviously on the condition that there will not be any deviation from its own principles. An up-to-date survey on the history of the community can clarify these relations and their possible effect on local participation.

Lacking a sound reason, development project failures are explained by the 'traditional way of thinking' of rural populations. It's very easy to say that peasants, due to psychological characteristics, are afraid of accepting certain changes. A deeper analysis shows that in general the reaction of peasants is well-founded. If

they do not wish to participate, it is because they have suffered in the past when they cooperated with other agencies requesting their help for similar projects, and have not enjoyed any benefits. A fair understanding of their reasons for rejecting or resisting certain development projects is indispensable. I believe that reasons for resistance are not the result of 'typical features of peasants' or of what some call 'the backward mentality,' but, more correctly, have socio-economic origins. This very point could be an interesting 'generating topic' for an educational programme.

The difficulties of coordination

To attain an integrated approach to literacy, the coordination and integration of education with other ongoing or planned development activities in a given region (that is, coordination of the educational institution with other development agencies) must be underscored. Since one stresses integrated rural development, this is not surprising: there is an awareness that education is only a tool within this process.

The goal of coordination is: integration in which attention is paid to the various development problems of the community, which are viewed as a coherent whole; to avoid an inefficient use of human resources, materials and economy, and not to cause confusion or rejection of community programmes by the population. It must seem odd to members of the community that different organisations sometimes carry out similar activities and then make contradictory recommendations.

However, it is very much in fashion to use the word coordination (and integration), but these pretty phrases do not transfer to reality. Many people, supposedly encouraging coordination, never come to understand the concept, much less make it concrete. The will to coordinate is impressive, particularly on paper. It leads to frustration, however, because the good intentions are so often abandoned.

There are different causes for the lack of coordination at the regional and local levels. I will list some here. The lack of communication and information exchange concerning the activities carried out by the various institutions is a handicap in achieving good coordination. This is also related to isolation from the various institutions and to a lack of unified criteria, not to mention partial approaches and separate specific goals. Each institution attempts to attain its own objectives without help from the others. This lack of unified criteria definitely does not encourage cooperation among agencies at the local level or any other level. The reality in Latin America is that most programmes and projects have a sectoral nature. They have not been prepared jointly by the various ministries, but by each going its own way.

Another point is that many development institutions and ministries continue to give preference to massive national programmes that are uniform for the whole country and which do not take into consideration the concrete local situation where their technicians work. This excludes any possibility of achieving coordination as

long as it is not part of programme planning, and leads to programmes that are not adapted to the region.

Occasionally, coordination is neglected for budgetary reasons. It is said that the budget is not sufficient to carry out major activities related to coordination. The fact that good coordination can mean reduced expenses is not taken into consideration. An important reason not to coordinate is that many development agencies feel that they already have too much work. Naturally, the first steps to achieve coordination imply more work, but in the long term good coordination can mean less work and more efficiency.

Development agencies working at the regional and local levels have few possibilities of attaining coordination. This is due, among other things, to the lack of autonomy of officials and of the divisions at the base level of command. There is a lack of potential power to demand coordination or to base it on grounds other than 'good will.' In certain projects some collaboration emerges, although this is almost always ad hoc and the result of personal relationships.

One cannot speak of formalized coordination however, and it is a weak coordination since it lacks political support. In addition, this type of collaboration is often made difficult because of frequent personnel turnover and resulting changes in activities. Development agency specialists, because of the nature of their particular field and the way they are commissioned, often have a restricted notion about development and consider their own specialisation to be the main axis. In the case of the adult educator, the matter is more complex. He would be a logical choice for a coordinating role. His studies however, compared with those of other specialists, are an obstacle to gaining their full respect, and as a result his efforts to achieve coordination are not taken seriously.

The best type of coordination results when the future participants themselves specifically request coordination. After all, it is they who are at the centre of the activities, and it is they who know the various programmes and the local development problems. Theory does not assign priority to certain problems or specialisations because of an a priori preference for any given development agency. However, a certain degree of organisation is required by the local population for this type of coordination and the agencies must work in such a way as to make this possible. In this way, future participants can participate in the planning and implementation of the programmes.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the need for making a good basic study. An essential requirement for any organisation that will be working in a given region is to investigate the other development agencies, thereby directing it's view to further coordination: What are their programmes, plans, resources and personnel? Complete and up-to-date knowledge of positions and the potential of other agencies and local administrative bodies must be known if the new education project is to become incorporated into existing development processes. At the same time, the new agency

should introduce itself, taking the same questions into account. In addition to requesting information from the offices of the agencies involved, it is advantageous to visit the agencies' projects in the communities and to obtain information about them from participants and non-participants.

Can we work literacy into every context of development in developing countries?

Om Shrivastava

Adult literacy movements are getting recognition all over the world. The importance of literate citizens is acknowledged by all nations of the world, particularly those where the incidence of illiteracy is very high. Literacy and basic education are recognized as 'fundamental human rights.' The organization of learning opportunities for illiterate people to gain the skills of literacy is a complex task. There are many factors which need to be considered: the linguistic, motivational, organizational, training and research, and financial etc., and all these aspects are important.

The emphasis here is to critique the present system from the point of view of the adult learner. Hence, there is a need to understand the adult learners, their perception about themselves, about learning, about learning to read and write. An effort is made to present results of research studies and issues from the literature from all over the world to seek help in the critique.

The modern practice of adult education: androgogy versus pedagogy

Malcolm Knowles identifies four area of difference: the concept of self, experience, readiness to learn, and orientation to learning. He observes that the adult sees himself as less dependent than the child and should therefore be treated with the respect due to him by virtue of his age and experience. He should also be involved in any plans and decisions that affect him. The experience of an adult is more extensive and varied than that of a child; and although this very experience can be a rich source of untapped knowledge, it could also render him less open-minded. For 'readiness to learn' he mentions the idea of 'teachable moments,' similar to Havinghurst's ideas. Havinghurst has proposed a theory of 'development tasks' and 'teachable moments' which implies that as an individual goes through life, he assumes different roles such as student, worker, lover, husband, father and so on.

Furthermore, the best time to learn these tasks is when they are just about to occur - the 'teachable moment.' The last point made by Knowles on the subject of 'Orientation to Learning,' is mainly concerned with the outlook of the adult towards 'immediacy' in the application of recently acquired knowledge, as compared to the child who usually must be, and is, content with deferred application.

A similar idea of relevance and immediacy appears in the report of the 1965 Conference of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy which concluded:

> 'The very process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can immediately be used to improve living standards; reading and writing should lead not only to elementary general knowledge but to training to work, increased productivity, a greater participation in civil life and a better understanding of the surrounding world, and should ultimately open the way to basic human culture.'

Birren and Ulmer have identified psychological, sociological and physiological changes that occur with advancing age. Ulmer observes that:

> 'The profound nature of these changes results in an adult vastly different from the child - the child is not the father of the man, rather the man is what he makes himself. Physiologically, the body grows rapidly, at first reaching its prime sometime during adolescence, then gradually declines with the onset of aging. Loss of visual and aural acuity in adulthood is a clear manifestation of such changes. Sociologically, from an initial desire for total self-preservation even to the point of being considered selfish, the child gradually becomes less subjective, and more objective as it grows older. Eventually, then, life has been well-lived, the adult arrives at the generative and integrative stages characterized by caring, sharing and a deep feeling of satisfaction.'

Psychologically, the adult, with his wide experience of living, perceives things differently if differently motivated, and regrettably is more prone to forget.

Adult learners

In his article on the adult learner, Siegle has summarized from research studies conducted that adults never cease to be able to learn but that certain significant physical changes do occur with age. As the adult grows older, speed of reaction and the tempo of his life slow down; eyesight and hearing lose their sharpness and a person tires more easily. If ability is reckoned only in terms of speed of reaction and physical stamina, then there can be no doubt that adults have less of this ability than younger people. But learning ability, like other productive capacities, consists of social and psychological as well as physical factors. Where speed and stamina are not of prime importance, adults do well.

But we need to understand those adult learners who may be different to some extent than the generalized picture drawn above. Those adult learners form a social class which is in some ways dominated by other groups and exploited to some extent, due to lack of communications skills in the language of the dominant group. Mabel Barny, after reviewing the literature on the disadvantaged adult, has summarized the following socio-psychological characteristics which have significant implications for learning.

1. Hostility and anxiety toward authority.
2. Alienation (feeling of powerless).
3. Present orientation (to live for today).
4. Sensitivity, especially towards non-verbal forms of communication.
5. Concrete rather than abstract thinking.
6. Lack of self confidence.
7. Reticence.
8. Values, attitudes and goals - (no goal orientation and motivation towards success).
9. Fear of school.
10. Motivation (lack of motivation).
11. Unacceptable behavior (sub-culture behavior which is not acceptable to the teacher).
12. Cultural deprivation.
13. Defence mechanism.

Teaching reading and writing

Along with these research findings we may also learn from some significant finding on teaching reading and writing.

Coole Verner in his article on learning to Read and Write mentions that reading involves certain forms of cognitive or information learning that are prerequisite to writing, and these should be achieved first. Writing, on the other hand, involves many of the tasks encountered in reading but it also includes motor learning that is not present in reading.

By combining all of these learning tasks simultaneously the difficulties imposed on the adult illiterate become overwhelming and prohibitive. Therefore, an ideal literacy education programme would strive for some facility in reading as an independent learning activity before introducing writing. He also says that reading is learned through the process of recognition but that writing requires recall. The ability to remember through recognition is greater than that through recall. Both of these processes need to be considered carefully in planning reading and writing.

Sohan Singh discusses some general principles for the teaching of reading. These are as follows:

1. The principle of meaningfulness.
2. The principle of the translation equivalence of speaking, listening and reading - writing.
3. The principle of maximizing the range of the moment of attention.
4. The principle of reinforcement.
5. The principle of maintaining a rhythm in the teaching of reading and writing.

The reason for outlining these principles is because Sohan Singh believes that it is difficult to lay down a method for teaching reading to adults.

In a comparative review of reading research, Downing states that some researchers have stressed the decoding aspects of reading and thus define reading as 'the creation of the sound form of the word according to its graphical model.' Others have emphasized the cognitive activity of reading and would work from the definition: reading is not a simple mechanical skill, nor is it a narrow scholastic tool. Properly cultivated, it is essentially a thoughtful process. It should be developed as a complex organization or pattern of higher mental processes. It can and should embrace all types of thinking evaluation, judging, reasoning, and problem solving.

Om Shrivastava offers a range of factors which need to be considered before the choice about the medium of instruction in field situations is made. For example:

1. What are the linguistic differences between the dialect and the standard regional/national language?
2. How complex is the written script of the standard language?
3. What is the status of the dialect in the region?
4. What are the resources (people, material, and money) available to produce materials for adults in the language under consideration?
5. Are there resources of written literature and information available in both languages under consideration?
6. Are there any national policy directives on the matter?

Each of these considerations will help in making better decisions about the choice of medium of instruction and so benefit both the objectives and the learners of the programme. The causes of literacy and development should not be hampered by rigidly taking sides in organizing programmes in either the dialect or the regional language only. The wider objective is to provide means of communication to the masses in order that they may participate more fully in the development process of a nation.

Choices for policy makers

The above-mentioned research has certain implications for policy makers in matching what is learned from the research and the present literacy programme. Analysis of issues can help us see that present administrative and organizational patterns shall not be able to make projects successful.

Let us consider the issue of organizing a literacy center, because the key is the successful operationalization of the center such that learning happens and learners learn. In a literacy center there are several components - learners, teachers, methods, materials, infrastructure support etc.

As has been mentioned, the learners are brought to a literacy center. Their participation in a way is like a consumer who would consider all factors before buying a product. Hence they come in large numbers initially. They test what is going on in the programme to determine whether it would help them in their immediate work or not. This is basically what happens when it has been noticed in several projects that the initial number in literacy classes is more than the prescribed number. Oxenham in his studies mentions that:

> '.... virtually every project in every country still starts out with over-enthusiastic over-subscriptions of enrollment. People would indeed like to be literate. However, the strength of their desire and its ability to carry them through to completion are still the uncertain factors.'

Another study in Bangladesh concludes:

> '....all adult participants as well as teachers, had a positive attitude towards the adult literacy programme, at least in the initial phase. They realize the importance of such programmes, but in spite of this both enrollment and attendance are far from satisfactory. The strongest barrier to motivation is poverty, since the potential learners need to use all their time earning a living, they cannot spare sufficient time to attend school. The programme moreover does not provide any immediate benefit, not any clear prospect for the future, and this is another major barrier.'

Both of those studies are making the point that people know the value of literacy but the way it is being planned raises a basic issue in that the motivation is created from outside and remains till people have concluded that the present literacy center model cannot help them in their day to day life.

If the whole activity was planned with the learners themselves, including their sharing responsibility, then the partnership would have lasted longer. This point has been made by Knowles.

Similarly, there is another point which has been brought out in a study conducted in Pakistan by ICAE's report:

> 'Learners must have had some exposure to written language, seen the need for reading or heard of other illiterates who have achieved success through literacy before they apply themselves to the lengthy task of becoming literate.'

In most of our programmes in the villages or work places where most of our learners live and work there are no visuals where they can practice this new learning. As a policy we may need to create a literate environment not only through literacy projects, but total development programmes. The main thesis emerging from this issue is that literacy needs to be inserted into an ongoing development programme aimed at solving perceived needs. This would encourage participation and motivation automatically.

We need to see that the learner not only comes with several built-in socio-psychological barriers but also physical ones. The very first important need for this person is psychological safety. His/her low self-image makes him/her very fragile. Such people, as described by Mabel and Anderson, come to attend our literacy centers, where there are 30 people. One can imagine that in such a center this person is only a number. She is not going to be treated with the care needed for such an individual. The differential need, differential speed of learning, and different psychological make-up demand that the teacher work on an individual level. The teacher may be able to organize peer leaning sessions through the research described above, but the needs of thirty such individuals cannot be met. The main issue then is the size and style of a learning event.

Considerations and criteria for literacy work

In the context of the characteristics of the adult learners outlined, it is almost mandatory that teacher preparation not only include work on sensitivity to both psychological and social needs, as both affect learning, but also designing learning activities which cater to differential speed, differential learning style, differential physical and personal needs. It is a tall order because no individual can possibly work with the learner outlined above. This means a one-time training model cannot serve the purpose. Also the whole project should be built a on participatory learning philosophy. This means the supervisors would have to spend more of their time

creating learning situations for teachers, and support and encourage such 'paracy' centers. These learning processes may be related to direct or immediate learning processes and would demand a special type of relationship with the project administrators.

The choice of language and preparation of materials are other issues which need to be considered from the research (Sohan Singh, Downing, Shrivastava) on teaching reading and writing. The demands on the infrastructure resulting from the adults' physical needs, questions about the venue and make up of the literacy center should also be considered.

All these considerations lead to the following criteria for literacy work in developing countries.

I The main thesis emerging from this issue is that literacy needs to be integrated into an on-going development programme aimed at solving perceived needs. This would encourage participation and motivation automatically.

II The teacher may be able to organize peer learning sessions through small group processes, but the kind of demands made by the thirty individuals described above, cannot be met. The main issue then is the size and style of a learning event.

III In the context of the characteristics of the adult learners outlined, it almost mandatory that teacher preparation not only include work on sensitivity to both psychological and social needs, as both affect learning, but also designing learning activities which cater to differential speed, differential learning style, differential physical and personal needs.

IV The choice of language, and preparation of material, are other issues which need to be considered from the research on teaching reading and writing.

V The demands on the infrastructure, resulting from the physical needs of adults, questions about the venue and make-up of the literacy center should also be considered.

The issues above, and many others, provide an indication to all of us that there is a need for a system which focuses on people, not administration. People, if trusted, will come forward to respond and participate in the process of change - if they could only be treated as people.

Can literacy work lead to a critical consciousness?

Kees Hammink

In this contribution I will comment on the awareness-raising potential of literacy-work and the possibilities for this. Functionality is not equal to awareness-raising. The first may imply the latter but this is not necessarily so. That literacy work should be functional is no longer to be disputed anymore. One does not acquire reading, writing and numeracy because it is deemed important. One acquires these skills to do something with them, to fulfill certain social, cultural and communicative functions. What is more important is to define what these functions are or should be.

Functionality and social necessity

In the debate on functional literacy over the last 30 years or so, much emphasis seems to be placed on functionality in terms of societal necessity. Functional literacy in this sense describes a minimum level of reading, writing and numeracy skills necessary to function adequately in certain social contexts such as the work organisation or in dealing with government institutions. The focus lies primarily on improving the adaptation of the illiterate to societal demands.

In the 70's and 80's this approach was heavily criticised, by Freire, among others. The focus shifts to a more active role of the literacy student. Literacy is not just seen as a better means of adaptation, but more so as the training for active social participation and active shaping of the own society and culture. In this debate terms like awareness-raising, critical consciousness and social change are put in the forefront. In the young history of Dutch literacy work this is symbolised in the title of a leading handbook on adult literacy by Noordijk en Tubbing: 'Learning to read and write means change'. The contribution of literacy to social change was the key issue. The relation between adaptation, which one could call functionality, defined in terms of societal demands and awareness-raising, and change, which one could call functionality defined in terms of the social position and supposed needs of the students, was seldom considered in this critical debate.

In many contributions to the debate, the former form of functionality was explicitly discarded as oppressive or at least uncritical (e.g. van Dijk 1989 for a Dutch contribution).

Critical consciousness

In discussing awareness-raising or creating consciousness, as is the more common term in our country, there arises a need to specify this concept. In the literature about literacy and adult education it always relates to a concept of consciousness that can be formed in the educative process.

In a recent report on non-formal education based on the sociological theory of Giddens, the following distinction was made by Broens, Jansen and van der Veen between forms of consciousness:

— practical consciousness, which is formed through instrumental learning, and which is not reflected;
— discursive consciousness, which is formed through expressive learning and personal development, and leads to reflection on a personal basis;
— reflexive consciousness, which extends the reflection into the societal conditions, possibilities and effects of individual action. The reflexive consciousness is formed through the development (in learning processes) of 'sociological imagination'.

This last category is comparable to what Freire calls the critical consciousness. Sociological imagination, a term proposed in 1963 by the American sociologist C. Wright Mills, seems an important concept in this context.

Briefly, it consists of the individual's insights into the relation between the individual life history, every-day events, wishes and expectations and social structures and events, and the development of action perspectives on the basis of these insights in which the individual is related with the social dimension of life. This type of notion can be found in the formulation of the primary goal of literacy in the Netherlands by Goudriaan and Noordijk in 1984:

> 'To teach adults who cannot read and write and who experience this as hindrance in the functioning of their social and personal lives. Reading and writing so that they can better grasp deeper insights and more influence over their own situation, and the social reality that influences that situation.'

It seems that when literacy enthusiasts speak about creation of consciousness, they refer to the form of consciousness in which the individual and the social is closely related in a critical meaning and directed towards improvement of unwanted social or personal situations.

So the question which remains to be asked is whether literacy can and should lead to this form of critical consciousness.

If you would have asked me ten years ago I would have answered 'YES it should' without much hesitation. I am not so certain anymore. The problem is not the 'should', the problem lies in the 'can'. Do we not overestimate the possibilities of literacy when we hope that it will lead to a critical consciousness and related action?

In the industrial societies where at least 85%, and maybe even 90% of the adults are literate, there is not a lot of critical consciousness to be found. It is, to say the least, certainly not the mainstream of our adaptive and individualised culture. Being literate is, therefore, no guarantee of a critical consciousness, let alone a guarantee of action or social change. Of course this situation may change if literacy were acquired in a different way from that which is prominent in our schools. Over the last 30 years many authors and researchers documented the adaptive and conformist character of our educational system and notably of literacy education. Some of them also showed alternative methodologies and didactics to break down this situation.

In the area of literacy, Freire is the most important of these critics. However he saw, more acutely than many of his followers in industrialised countries, myself included, that the political meaning of this alternative concept of adult literacy could only work under certain specific social conditions. The most important of them is the existence of clear and clearly-perceived oppression and the continuation of basically revolutionary social processes of change in society. Under both conditions literacy was possible as an element of collective action for the change of a social situation that was experienced as oppressive.

In industrialised countries these conditions are hardly present. Oppression and social exclusion do exist, but they take another more individualised form. It is not perceived as a collective problem. In addition, its sharp edges are polished away by a certain amount of welfare provide by the welfare society. (For an extensive analysis of modern industrial society see Beck 1986, among others)

The collective struggle for better living conditions does exist, but it is played on a preset playground surrounded by democratic and meritocratic rules with rather professional players (union delegates, politicians etc.) who are fairly removed from the everyday problems of the people at the bottom of the social ladder. In terms of literacy this means, among others things, that illiterates in our society do not primarily perceive themselves as part of a group which is oppressed and excluded from social participation, but as individuals with a shortage, a handicap. Not only illiterates see themselves in this way.

The government, which provides funding for literacy courses; the media which provides information about the problem, and many institutes and tutors offering courses hold the same view. The latter usually implicitly. The social dimension of

the problem is clearly present in their written goal formulations, but their actual practice is not completely congruent with these formulations. Literacy courses are presented to individuals who feel a need for those courses. There are many of them.

The question is whether the individuals' need, their goal to learn to read, write and calculate better, is directed towards a critical consciousness and action for change. In a conference organised by Jan Ooijens in 1987 I stated that most literacy students, at least in our country, come to courses to learn what they think everybody else already knows. (Hammink 1989) He or she wants to belong to and participate in his/her direct environment. To cope better in daily life and be part of everyday life seems a strong motive to engage in literacy.

Research into effects of literacy and into the ways students tend to define success shows that 'change' is defined in terms of belonging, coping better, growing self-confidence, speaking in company, breaking the perceived social isolation (see Brandsma and Wijnen and Charnley and Jones). It is primarily about changes which make personal living conditions more agreeable and which restore the feeling of being a valued member of their family or community. Political participation, the changing of oppressive structures in society, does not seem to be very high on the agenda. Seen in this light, consciousness-creation or awareness-raising seem to be overly ambitious goals. There is increasing awareness of this in actual practice, and in the development of literacy work in the Netherlands.

In a recently produced set of goals for adult basic education (of which literacy courses are a part) there is a clear tendency to formulate more modest goals and a shift back to the formulation of goals in terms of societal needs. Goals are now increasingly related to functionality in everyday life and functionality in terms of coping skills. However, the element of critically dealing with text materials did not completely disappear, but is placed in the context of social functionality. (See Noordijk et.al. 1990)

Literacy as an educational provision

There is another problem I want to touch on. Is consciousness-creation, with the accent on 'creation' possible at all? I remember a discussion at the University of Leuven, Belgium, on the occasion of Freire receiving an honoris causa doctorate. One of the participants in this discussion made the point that it was very difficult to make women conscious, and there was a good deal of resistance on their part. Freire answered that his approach has nothing to do with consciousness-creation; it is about growing critical consciousness. Creation was, according to him, a concept that belonged to the banking-definition of education. Conscious people are not made, people become conscious under certain conditions.

I agree with this statement. One of the possible conclusions that follows is that literacy only can try to create some of the conditions under which the growth of a critical consciousness and critical participation in society is possible. The possibility of this, however, is rather limited as I have tried to explain.

The most important social conditions (such as a collective consciousness of interests and needs, and collective organisation forms) tend to disappear in the individualised industrial society and, in addition, it is clear that these conditions are far out of the reach of literacy work, certainly in the way it is organised here in Holland.

Literacy in the Netherlands, as in many other industrialised countries, is organised as an educational provision for individuals (however most learning takes place in groups). As an institution it is relatively separate from other areas of social action (see, among others, Hammink 1990). Literacy is not part of a broader strategy to promote social participation and welfare of certain sectors of the population. Whether the possibilities for participation, for which literacy may provide some of the instruments are used and transferred into action towards change depends on the neo-literate and his/her social environment. Literacy work itself can hardly influence this. This influence could be improved if other organisational forms for literacy were developed. The combination of literacy with broader and more collective projects and actions for the improvement of the living conditions of specific groups, e.g. in community development projects, seems an option worth further investigation. Central to this is that the learning of literate skills is directly related to relevant areas of social action for those concerned.

I also noted that the individual conditions, in terms of the needs and wants of potential students, and in terms of the way they define their problems, are also not present. However, in the needs and wants as expressed by students, there seems to be a contradiction. Belonging, increased self-confidence, individual independence; in short, aspects of individual emancipation, are not simply aspects of adapting to existing values and norms. There is at least the implication of partial liberation of these values which are in a sense the same as the ones supporting the exclusion of illiterates. 'Belonging' is not strictly an individual capacity. As for the other aspects, the social environment will also have to change to make them possible. It is, however, out of the reach of literacy work to determine whether this will happen and to what extent.

What we may try to do is to provide the learners with the necessary skills to engage in this process of change in his/her own environment which appears so small on a macro level, but so important on a personal level. One important element of these skills seems to me to be that the learner acquires what many others already know and are capable of; cultural skills for social participation and the improvement of the quality of daily life. This you could call the functional adaptive aspect. A second directly related aspect is the surpassing of this functional 'adaptation'

through the development of insights into the social norms and values which underlay the use of literacy skills. In this sense literacy can never be seen separate from the acquisition of social knowledge and skills.

We may not change the world with this. We could provide some instruments to assist the growth of a critical consciousness. However, whether, and to what extent these instruments are going to be used, is beyond our reach.

Conclusion

Literacy as such cannot be awareness-raising. It may form a little contribution in a process of growing critical consciousness and critical participation in society. That it should do. To be able to do this as effectively as possible, literacy must be increasingly related to processes and actions directed toward the improvement of living conditions for those at the bottom of society. It must do more than just repair education for individuals who happen to be illiterate.

Beyond literacy

Satyabrata Barik

The World today is in a transition - a great moment in the history of mankind. The overall human consciousness in on the rise. The rate of rise is unprecedented. True, half of the world's population does not have sufficient food to eat. But, today's man cannot be content with 'bread alone.' Demands of a higher level are on the card. Now people are ready to sacrifice their life to win individual freedom. Democracy can no longer remain a camouflage.

The world is being set for self-determination - a real world indeed, of free and disciplined individuals. A new light is in sight, to chase the darkness of discrimination and despotism. Now education has to be ready for such a challenging moment. No more should we broadcast literacy along the length and breadth of any populace and be complacent with our achievements, that is, giving the learners only the ability to read and write. It is rather the will of the majority, the well-being of the majority which should make the quintessence of our literacy campaign.

Any educational efforts short of these goals will shamefully lie behind our time and prove no worth in the long run. So now literacy has to look for a new embodiment, a new identity. It has to take a redefined position in regard to the education of those innumerable unknown, uncared for and unheard of individuals, most of whom are third world citizens.

A shocking coincidence

Of course we would be explaining the context and content beyond mere literacy. Human aspirations and realities of life prompt us to do so.

It needs no emphasis that the thinking minds today concern themselves with the millions of men and women who, despite their eyes, are no better than the blind, having little awareness of the world around, determining things as they choose.

As several of our studies show, along with our practical experience, poverty in most cases has got an inseparable intimacy with illiteracy. As if the man in extreme want is destined to go without education; school education. Then how can we ignore this affinity between economic conditions and socio-cultural development? Barring individual exceptions amongst whom we see learned people undergoing economic poverty or people in penury striving for certain level of educational attainment, we

have a vast mass of poverty-stricken people whose life only rolls round a vicious circle. They spend all their time and energy trying to put their body and soul together. There is nothing left for them to spend on a broader life. When we take a close look at such a community, ironically, their style of living seems complete, involving all the dimensions of day-to-day work, community festivals, marriages and funerals, conflicts and problem-solving mechanisms and entertainment too, all working in smooth harmony.

The parents and elders in a family take the larger burdens, requiring the young ones to carry out the supplementary jobs like child care, cattle grazing, fuel-gathering and many other small but gainful and indispensable activities.

This kind of life hardly can afford a space for school education which demands certain amount of time as well as mental concentration of a particular kind. Aside from the case of adults, a family can hardly afford to spare its children for school and get on their helping with the daily domestic chores which are part of its survival. Moreover, what will the education do for them? Immediately and in the long run? We are at our wit's end convincing such people with an answer. They work, earn something and live on. When they sometimes save, they enjoy in their own way. Why should they go in for education? Thus poverty becomes the reason for illiteracy, and ignorance in turn adds to poverty in many complex ways.

Who is interested in a literacy campaign?

Certainly, the illiterates are not. Why are we, the educated people, the government, the mass media and other elite groups, then, interested in educating the illiterate majority? There are easy explanations. On humanitarian grounds we want all people to live as human beings. We want the inequality to be eliminated and a new social order prevail. We want the poorest of the poor and the weakest of the weak to add their voice to the democratic process. Therefore, literacy as a liberating force should spread among the illiterates and open their eyes to the wholeness of the world.

Noble as these explanations sound, they often adorn our policy documents and glorify the speeches of the national leaders, educators and activists. But most of their intellectual honesty has got serious limitations. They do not mean the total ramifications of what they say. What they mean is a blanket cover of literacy all over the population to save the so-dearly-held nation from the shame in the international community. For those who are at the upper level of mainstream, it is a stigma to have a majority of your fellow citizens not be able to read and write.

They want to rid themselves of such an embarrassment through a 'literacy campaign.' If it were not so, and the process truly followed what has been said, the horizon would be wider and the incoming change greater. And inevitably the privileged class of the present would be the first victim of change. The hitherto

oppressed sections would demand a share of power and wealth from the former, creating an egalitarian society has no other way out than this. Don't they anticipate this wave?

The best of the brains are, of course, from the upper section of society. They would very much be able to apprehend such a sea change if the education in its vastness were let loose. That is why and where the skepticism arises that those who are seemingly concerned about bringing literacy to the deprived people, perhaps have a deliberately limited concept in mind! But the challenges as they stand out, and the imperatives that are perceived, call for a different set of commitments. Accordingly the domain of literacy will have to cover the issues related to real-life situations and greater societal needs.

Economic freedom

The colonized states of the past have only shaken off the imperial yoke. But their economic homework is still pending. Indeed, the past rulers have left their shadows on the native setup. In India, for example, those sections who helped sustain the struggle against the British are now having their day while sixty percent of the population has yet to have their basic needs met. The economic imbalances between different groups have caused frustration and created worse situations like bonded labor, child selling and death from starvation. Shouldn't these be concerns for education?

In understanding the dynamics of the economy in its historical backdrop, market relations determining the distribution of income and the exploitation by the capitalist forces are the topics which should constitute the educational components. As the saying goes, - knowledge is power, - so the analyses and reflections will empower the powerless.

Educational limitations accepted, mere awareness-building will not earn one's bread, but definitely it would help fight for bread. Teaching the poor something isolated from their economic livelihood is the gravest crime a teacher could ever commit. To a community in which men, women and children have a definite economic role to play, it is foremost and indispensable that its education must have economic issues included in the curriculum.

Political education

It is not directed against or in favor of any government or political party. It is for raising people's social consciousness and growth consciousness as well. An individual or a community or a society must be in a position to establish where it

stands in relation to others and try to consciously participate in the greater process of development.

Take the village where mere voting is taken as democracy. We will not only explain in detail what the democratic values are, but our teacher could see them practice in this school and the surrounding environment. There is always a problem to be solved, a leader to be selected and give responsibility, some undesirable practice to be put to an end. Usually these are the concerns of a few unquestionable individuals. But now things have to be set right. Opportunities will be created for the lowest of the members to add their voice to the decision-making process.

India, for example has a heritage of Panchayati Raj; Government by people at the village and cluster level. That, in long course of time, has meant the government has been eroded by the hierarchical structure of the society, concentration of the decision-making as well as norm interpreting powers in a handful of shining people or, in many cases, one traditional head. This way of regulating the lives of the people has done more harm than good to the majority.

Now education has to take the responsibility of distributing these powers among all and democratize the process.

One might think that it seems reasonable to talk of democracy with the adults but their children are too young to be taught on this political line. Of course lessons for them would not be same as for adults. It is actually a preparatory period for children in developing political sensitivity in future. Political teaching will help the learner develop his questioning faculty and something to bring home the truth of social situations. The children must learn not only the roles of different individuals, as they ought to play, but also as they recall playing. Opening up their contradictions to the learner will sharpen their political bent of mind.

Spiritual input

This is, however, not to preach non-violence and teach the learners to live peacefully against any odds. On the basis of our faiths that human being is capable of love and tolerance, we would try to maintain an egalitarian approach. Unlike the spiritual extremists who propagate unconditional love and tolerance, our education must stress self-respect and reciprocity. These are also the ingredients of political formation, if they do not adhere to violations and counter-violations. In keeping with this broad view, the learners must be able to understand each other, work together for a common cause and draw inspiration from the belief that the good of the majority is what God wants to happen. Taking into consideration the target people for whom this literacy is needed, spiritually this would mean removing from their mind the feeling of inferiority, sense of fear and frustration. Our education must give them a feeling of importance and worthiness.

A last word

In the present context we can hardly afford to forgo these issues beyond mere literacy. If they are sure to come in some form or other, why would we not allow them to come through education? The non-believers will have to rebuild their concept of literacy to widen its horizon. The details of how to inculcate these issues - economic, political & spiritual - into the educational framework are a set of different considerations and need expert help. What we need at present is a consensus in adopting a policy wider than literacy alone.

बहनें पढ़ें बैठ कर साथ
घर घर पहुंचे प्रेम की बात

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Do we need separate literacy courses for women?

Fie van Dijk

The answer to the question as to whether we need separate literacy courses for women is definitely yes, yes, yes! I will explain this answer. Perhaps it is enough to quote a Greek author, Menander, who lived 300 years before Christ. He wrote: 'Teach a woman letters? A terrible mistake: Like feeding extra venom to a horrifying snake.'

The position of women in literacy definitions

In academic literature and many statements about illiteracy, women hardly exist. Authors who write about ancient Greece tell us that in Plato's day a large part of the population knew how to read and write in an alphabetic script. But they don't mention that women and slaves - mind the combination! - were not supposed to read and write.

UNESCO's definition of literacy in 1956 was:

> 'A person is functionally literate when HE has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable HIM to engage in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in HIS culture or group.'

Even in 1978 UNESCO defines a functional literate person as:

> 'A person who is able to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of HIS group and community and for enabling HIM to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for HIS own and the community's development.'

I won't go into the content of these statements now.

However, the relation between illiteracy and functioning in society and development of a community is rather speculative. My point is that men (or women identifying with men) often define literacy and illiteracy for men only. This has consequences for the practice of literacy work.

In any case, it must be clear that we can presume gender-specific aspects in the social practices and concepts of literacy: as we all know, female illiteracy rates are considerably higher than those of males in both urban and rural areas all over the world. I will return to these gender-specific aspects later.

The autonomous versus the ideological model of literacy

First we must consider the theoretical framework within which we ask questions like: Do we need separate literacy courses for women. We have to choose which model of literacy we wish to subscribe to. To clarify the differences between the various approaches to the analysis of literacy I will call upon the ideas of the British social-anthropologist Brian Street, laid down in his book 'Literacy in theory and practice'. Street distinguishes two different approaches to the analysis of literacy: the autonomous model and the ideological model.

In short: the autonomous model is dominant in much academic literature, in Unesco and other agencies concerned with literacy. It isolates literacy as an independent variable and them claims to be able to study its consequences. The question for agencies and the literacy campaigns conducted becomes: how can people be taught to decode written signs, and, for example, to avoid spelling problems? The autonomous model associates literacy with progress, civilization, individual liberty and social mobility. The consequences of literacy are presented in terms of economic progress or in terms of cognitive improvement.

Those who subscribe to the second model, the ideological model, concentrate on the specific social practices of reading and writing. Literacy is not a clear-cut issue, that is easily resolved by determining whether one reads and writes, or does not. There is not a single level of literacy, but a variety of levels, located within cultural wholes, as well as within power structures.

The consequence of dealing with the autonomous model of literacy is that there is no need for separate literacy courses for women, because the process of learning to read and write is seen as a sheer technical matter: the decoding of written signs. These technical aspects are supposed to be learned in isolation from the cultural aspects. Literacy is neutral here, independent, autonomous, somehow divorced from the social and ideological context which gives meaning to it. If I should adopt this view, my answer to the question: Do we need separate literacy courses for women, should be: NO! If so I could finish now. But I am dealing with the ideological model of literacy, and the consequence of that is that we'll have to investigate the historical, social and cultural context of illiterate women. It should be clear that literacy concepts and practices widely differ from one culture to another. So, first I will speak about some general aspects concerning female illiterates, and later I will go into the matter of illiterate women in the Netherlands.

In many situations it is a dominant group within a society that is responsible for spreading literacy to other members of that society and to subcultures within it. We can find examples in 'colonial' literacy, where members of an outside culture introduced their particular form of literacy to a colonized people, as part of a much wider process of domination such as: the Netherlands, for instance, imposing Dutch language on the children of the West Indies. Or there is the opposite type of example: South Africa enforcing the use of local languages as part their divide-and-rule policy.

On the other hand, beyond these obvious features of the 'colonial' model of literacy transmission, it is also important to take into account a degree of 'internal' domination in the ways literacy campaigns are conducted. The primary dimensions of this new power structure involve the dominance of urban areas over rural, of central elites over local population, and of men over women. Of course, the best organization is the organization of the learners themselves. They should organize themselves on the basis of their own needs, and appropriate monitor. I know this happens in some cases in Brazil (Aditepp, Critiba), and I am interested to hear of your experiences of self-organization.

In the Netherlands the society has become over-organized with a flourishing bureaucracy, conventional schools for adult education and agencies for basic education, professional, and therefore, mostly middle class teachers, plans for curricula and modules, and a tendency towards vocational training - regardless of whether there is paid work or not. In addition, life in a western society is quite individualized (a learner who joins a literacy group often assumes she is the only one in town who is illiterate), and illiteracy has acquired a label of stupidity and incapability, so people keep their reading and writing problems a secret. Especially women who have no paid job may keep this secret for years and years, until some disaster or big change in their life occurs (like the death of a father or husband who did the reading and writing work, divorce, children asking for help with homework, etc.).

I don't want to bother you with all bureaucracy concerning Basic Education in Holland. But at a congress about women, education and emancipation, held in Breda in October 1988, it was established that women are not mentioned as a group of learners with specific needs in every educational scheme. We must be aware that more women have to participate in the management and administration of governmental and local agencies. And they must stimulate investigations of the needs of women in the local area concerning literacy, and organize activities to make literacy accessible to women. Thus, we must ask questions like: Who is providing education for women? Why? Who controls it?

Research of women's literacy needs

I already mentioned the need of research concerning women's literacy needs. A good example of this kind of research is the beautiful book 'Ways with words', by Sylvia Brice Heath. Over a period of ten years she studied the uses (and non-uses) of literacy in two small communities in the United States. She found out that the only writing in the community 'was done by middle-aged and older women, who wrote down some family records of births and deaths, recipes to share at church functions, and favorite Bible verse, poems, or sayings for use in Sunday school classes. These writings were usually kept in the family Bible of telephone book.'

Another example of literacy research in a community is the work of Ann Fingeret (1983). She argues that illiterate adults do not see themselves as dependent simply because they lack reading and writing skills. This is a very interesting outcome, since literacy agencies and mass media in the western world do stress the dependency of illiterates. But Fingeret doesn't distinguish gender-specific aspects of dependency: a man, being dependent on his wife or other people in reading and writing matters is less dependent than a woman being dependent on her husband or her family, just because of her social position as a woman.

At Amsterdam University (Project Adult Education) we started our research about women and illiteracy with the question: What are the hidden barriers for women in taking part in literacy classes? We found out that gender specific aspects play an important role in the process of learning to read and write. These are some of them: The simple fact that a woman starts learning again, means that she puts her position within the family up for debate. The women often get little or no support from their house-mates or family ('you are good enough as you are'). This often has to do with their dependency on the family, and with their own values and beliefs and those of their environment about what makes a good daughter, a good wife, a good mother. The women often face difficult circumstances because of a bad financial situation. The women have no time, no money, to join a literacy class. When the plumber comes, or a visitor, or a child or any member of the family is ill, the woman is supposed to stay at home. There is a lack of child care centers at the courses: if the women have to organize a baby sitter themselves, they have to invent a poor excuse or confess to being illiterate.

Conclusion

For the reader the complexity of the matter can become confusing. I mentioned various aspects of women's illiteracy: first I offered you a theoretical framework within which we have to put the question of separate literacy courses for women. Then I stated my choice for an ideological model of literacy, the different levels of

literacy, the power structures within which literacy functions, and the gender-specific aspects of the acquisition of literacy.

The conclusion, however, is simple: as long as the power division between women and men is unequal, women need a room of their own, and should gain access to a literacy that is richer than the functional literacy tailored to the work of men. I'd like to finish with the words of a woman who told me why she is learning to read and write:

'I wanted something of my own.
I did not want to be dependent.
I wanted to be free.
If you can do things on your own
You are going to do things on your own. Sports and that sort of thing.
Read orders.
Fill in forms.
Sign your name at a wedding.
Travel by train.
For the first time we'll travel to Italy on our own.
I want to learn Italian.
I want to learn to drive a car.
I want freedom.

That I can get a book.
And make my own dresses.

Now I say: I do it for my children too.

But in the first place I do it for myself.'

Teach literacy in the first or second language?

Bastiane Tholen

Over the past decades, several hundred thousand inhabitants of countries outside Europe have settled in the Netherlands. The largest groups of immigrants come from the so-called recruitment countries around the Mediterranean, namely Turkey and Morocco. There are approximately 150,000 Turkish and Moroccan adults living in the Netherlands. Of those, about a third are illiterate. The distribution is as follows:

11% of the Turkish men
36% of the Turkish women } 24%

38% of the Morroccan men
79% of the Morrocan women } 60%

are illiterate

About 30,000 immigrants are reached through basic education, of which about 10,000 with a literacy course in Dutch. About 750 people take a course in their own language. These figures are only an approximation as the numbers are estimations, albeit educated guesses. They do show that the interest for the problem of immigrant literacy is only a recent phenomenon in the Netherlands. Only for the past eight years has there actually been a distinction made between immigrants who speak and understand no Dutch and those who, in addition, are also illiterate, that is that they also cannot read or write in their own language. Moreover, there has not yet been any quantitative study done directed toward the scope of the problem. One of the activities during the year of literacy will be to further specify these estimates.

The question which continues to be asked within these groups of immigrants along with those who cooperate in an effort to make them literate is the following: 'Is it possible to express a preference for literacy in the first or second language?' The answer is not a simple one. For in choosing for a particular course model, several interests play a role. Those of the participants, whose choice is based on their own motives and future perspectives. Those of the government, which is interested in having as many immigrants as possible gain a command of Dutch as

quickly as possible in order to integrate faster and better into Dutch society, at the least possible cost. This is clear from the government's decrees and decisions: in basic education the native language can only be used if it helps in learning Dutch.

I would like to enumerate a number of practical and didactic points, with which institutions alike the Dutch Center for Foreigners (NCB) are confronted.

1. How is the current situation in the Netherlands in relation to courses offered in basic education?
2. What can science offer us?
3. What is the NCB's viewpoint?

The educational institutions must, regardless of their choice, overcome such practical and didactic problems in order to offer the education their students are requesting.

The current state of literacy in the Netherlands with respect to immigrants

An illiterate is someone who has not learned to read and write at all, or sufficiently. In our society today, a world in which information is passed on with letters, reading and writing is a basic skill. Illiterate immigrants in the Netherlands are faced with two learning problems at once: learning to read and write and learning the Dutch language. The starting point of the learner can vary enormously:

a. They have only oral command of the mother tongue.
b. They acquire some command of Dutch up to a certain level.

In order to learn to read, a substantial oral command of the 'reading language' is a prerequisite.

The decree in the Netherlands states that the native language can be used as the target language if this leads to learning Dutch. In fact this creates three different possible approaches:

1. Reading and writing in the native language, possibly including a Dutch conversation course. This is uncommon. Only 1.4% of basic education courses are conducted in the native language.
2. Reading and writing Dutch using the native language as the oral language of instruction. This is a new and positive development.
3. Reading and writing Dutch using Dutch as the language of instruction.

First Approach. Literacy in the native language has the following advantages: less time is needed for learning, because of all the rules and knowledge that are used only a small portion are related to the writing code itself. For the remainder you use knowledge and rules that are applied in the same way when you are trying to

understand and use spoken language, such as strengthening of identity, language retention and the possibility of using 'adult didactic' such as learned experience.

But the disadvantage is that language proficiency in the second language during the reading and writing process is not stimulated, and the functional level is reached later. There is, however, an additional problem. The language of the country of origin is not always the mother tongue of the learner. Moreover, there are other practical problems such as the composition of the groups, a shortage of teachers and material.

The two largest groups of immigrants in the Netherlands, the Turks and Moroccans, each have their own set of problems with reading and writing. Reading and writing in Turkish is not really an issue. It is possible, and it is fairly extensive in terms of material and didactic. Even if learning Dutch is taken up later in the learning process, the learner will not have to start back at the beginning as the writing system is generally similar to Dutch.

It is a different matter for Moroccans. Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is not a native language, but a second language for most Moroccans who speak Berber or Moroccan with each other. But MSA is a language accorded great prestige, a global language which forms a highly-regarded standard politically, socially and religiously for all Arab countries. And it is possible to choose words for reading which are sufficiently close to the 'spoken' language. In choosing MSA as a literacy language for Moroccans in the Netherlands there are difficulties. The argument that the language is closer to the people is, as we saw, only partly true. It is not a logical step in learning to read and write in Dutch. It is, after all, a second language for illiterate Moroccans, as is Dutch. Arabic has a different writing system, and the transfer to Dutch is, therefore, minimal.

Second Approach. Another option is teaching literacy in Dutch using the native language as the language of instruction. This approach enables the new language to be introduced in the native language. Not only technical aspects such as sound-sign connection and script conditions, but also aspects of contents such as orientation to the contents and personal experiences with the subject of the lesson. The teacher can correct and stimulate in the language most familiar to the learner.

Third Approach. The third possibility is to work in Dutch with Dutch as the language of instruction. This is currently the most common course format. It is a format that is, however, unfortunately not very successful. This is, of course, not only due to the language chosen, but also due to a number of factors which negatively influence the learners' success: lack of child care, frequency of classes, specific expertise of the teachers and, until recently, inadequate material.

Before one can begin with reading and writing, a certain level of oral language proficiency must be developed, because the spoken language is the means with which and in which one is learning.

The contribution of research

What contribution can be expected from research? Primarily only opinions can be found in Dutch texts. And knowledge gained from experience is described. The arguments that are presented are the following: in learning to read, beginning readers must be able to use their knowledge of vocabulary and structure of the language in order to give meaning to the words and sentences. It is, therefore, necessary that the learner's vocabulary is sufficient in the language in which he learns to read. This conclusion was drawn by Emmelot and Van Kooten who, in 1986, asked teachers to determine if the language in which people were learning to read and write influenced their achievement.

In 1988, Christine Gelauff-Hanzon interviewed potential Turkish and Moroccan course participants. One of the questions she asked them was their preference for language used in the courses. She came to the conclusion that it is advisable to broaden the possibilities for learning to read and write in one's native language, by, for example, not binding the condition that it be used as a mean of learning Dutch.

Kurvers and Van der Zouw researched the success of the Dutch-language literacy courses for foreign women. The conclusion was, unfortunately, that the results of everyone's efforts in 7 out of 10 cases were lamentable. They studied the English-language literature to determine if a comparable study had been done as to the effectiveness of learning to read and write in the first or second language. The conclusions of that study are ambiguous.

It is, apparently, a very complex issue including many variables that are difficult to isolate. There is not, therefore, a lot to go on. But we do have the knowledge from our own experience. Differences in style of learning, pace of learning and achievements in learning Dutch among people who have learned to read and write (all having learned in their own language) and those who have yet to begin that process is an important indication. The marginal success of Dutch-language courses are also an indication. And, last but not least, there are, of course, the learning preferences and motivations of the participants who are an important part of the learning process.

The role of the NCB

The Dutch Center for Foreigners (Nederlands Centrum Buitenlanders - NCB) is an organization whose goal is to promote the interests of immigrants in the Netherlands. They work in cooperation with, and with support from, organizations of minority groups. One of the areas in which the NCB is involved is education and adult education. Of course literacy falls within that area.

The NCB does not proclaim its opinion on what makes a better, more responsible or efficient course. Too few unambiguous arguments can be found in the scientific research on this issue. But we do make a choice. That is, that ultimately the participant himself must be able to choose from the three alternatives mentioned above:

— native language;
— Dutch using native language as language of instruction;
— Dutch using Dutch as language of instruction.

We are dealing, after all, with adult learners who want to learn to read and write so that they can ultimately function better in society, in a manner for which they have chosen.

In order to make a truly responsible choice for a certain type of course, a number of hurdles must be removed. The most important point is the availability of teachers who are fluent in the native language of the participants. Potential teachers from the ethnic group to which the learners belong is still much too small. Currently about 80 teachers are being trained to educate in the native language, but they are spread throughout the country and are a drop in the ocean. Teachers are important, but so is good teaching material.

Over the past three years the NCB has developed a literacy course for Dutch as a second language. The provision of material for Arabic and Turkish is slowly but surely getting underway.

The most important policy point should be to increase the possibilities for organizing literacy courses in the native language so that participants can choose in which language and with which objectives they can master learning to read and write.

Once again: a choice is imperative!

PART TWO

APPLICATIONS

Literacy crash course

An experiment with tribal women

Om Shrivastava

The present prevalent programmes of literacy are based on provision of some opportunities for tribals for adult literacy with an emphasis on a mass-system approach and not on how learners see literacy. This case study of a Literacy Crash Course which was conducted by myself and three village colleagues for women of Kotra Development Block, our field area, is an alternative selective approach which systematically involves the learners, both in planning and in being a part of the process. The Kotra Block in the Udaipur District, which is located in the state of Rajasthan, India, is an area inhabited by tribals (86%) and the literacy rate is 1.5% for the female and 10% for the male population.

Astha* has been working in Kotra Development Block since September 1986. The main objective of our work is to initiate a process of development through organization and education. We believe that people have the power to think about, understand and take action on the problems of their world. Through our efforts we have created opportunities for people to come together and learn, reflect, analyze their problems and seek out ways and means to solve them.

With this process, the initial work has been related to several issues of exploitation during a drought period and later, training camps were organized with an emphasis on awareness-raising, leadership and creating understanding about different development projects. Other types of training camps were, among others, on backyard poultry, health, self-help credit societies and administration.

Background of the learners

During this process, many women who started taking a leadership role in the villages, realized that illiteracy is a handicap in fulfilling their group leadership responsibilities. They are able to discuss, and analyze but when they needed to work

* Astha is a non-governmental organisation working among tribals of the Kotra Development Block, southeast of Rajasthan State, India.

and take action in their development programmes, they needed literacy skills literacy. This need was talked about in our monthly meetings, hence a literacy course was planned.

The learners who came for this literacy class were from several women's groups in our field area. These women had taken leadership in their areas on several issues and actions. They were motivated as they were facing problems in their work situation - whether it was small poultry unit management, or operating the self-help credit society's account or any other work in relation to preparing applications for the Block Development Officer, Police etc. The age group of the learners ranged from 19 years to 50 years. They had no previous experience in literacy except that one women's husband was a literacy teacher.

It was clear to us that they had neither the regular time to attend a literacy class as a daily wage earner nor the interest in learning and mastering literacy skills for nine months, other than reaching a level they could use in their work. Hence a crash course on literacy evolved. Discussions were held in relation to when the women would be free for 9-10 days without affecting their house and/or work. This was important because many of them supplement their family income by working as wage laborers and collectors of minor forest produce.

Our preparations

We were interested in a 9-10 day course because we were keen to let them learn basic alphabets and numbers so that they could start reading simple words and sentences at the end of this course as well as doing simple addition and substraction. We were also hoping that though this we could inspire so much interest in them that they might become continuous learners. In preparing for this residential course, an important consideration was preparation of a place to study and stay. We knew that some women would be bringing their children, so the accommodation was close enough to the study area for supervision by the mother. We made the two places close enough so that learning could go on any time of the day. We were also interested in enabling informal and mutual learning to take place among the participants.

While preparing for the literacy class, I was trying to look for a possible primer but I found that most of the words in prepared primers used to initiate learning were not words which would be understood in the first place by these women without any help. In addition, the women were coming from communities where the literacy environment was minimal. Most of the women coming to the course lived at least 50-1,000 kilometers from any big town or city and their Hindi vocabulary (regional as well as national language) was not very large.

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Being an adult educator who believes that an adult is a self-directed learner who learns what is meaningful to him or her, I thought of creating a primer along with the learners. The curriculum for the 10 day literacy course was planned in terms of reading and writing all alphabets using the analytical method, using pictures, people and objects. Numeric targets were: learning numbers up to 100, writing the numbers up to 50 and learning simple addition and subtraction. We would review these objectives as we went along.

In preparation we collected a lot of old pictures from the each-one-teach-one primer of Rajasthan Adult Education Association, Jaipur. We cut out words from magazines, and purchased plastic numbers & alphabets etc. We put pictures around the classroom without any words. Most of these pictures were of women involved in several tasks, including reading and writing. As one of the objectives was to prepare young village people to be innovative literacy teachers, three young people were invited to help and learn how participatory literacy learning can happen through a camp approach.

The course starts

The course was joined by 16 tribal women. To establish a rapport and create an informal atmosphere, the programme started with a song by the participants.

I wanted to let them feel that the learning would be interesting and exciting, but demanding. We started the first session by recalling our childhood encounters with school, but, with the exception of two women, nobody had any experience of school, though many had some relatives who were literate. Many knew that reading and writing were important, but it was an unknown field.

Then I played a game called 'name-game.' With a big marker I wrote on small cards the name of each person and asked them to memorize their name by size and shape. Everyone was then asked to put the card in a pile. Then each woman was called on to search for her name card. Surprisingly, many were able to recognize it on the first try, but others took some time. The women enjoyed the game and in the process were made aware that with a small effort they would be able to read.

Learning to read

To teach reading, I used the concept of 'simple to complex' and chose abstract symbols close to their reality. This was done by choosing 5 words consisting of all the Hindi vowels. The words were close to their reality. The words chosen corresponded with pictures. Out of these five words, one needed to be explained because, in their dialect, it was spoken differently.

First we associated the word with the picture. Then the whole word was recognized as a word with certain sounds (Hindi is a phonetic language). The word was broken into the sounds of the letter and a whole exercise of association of sound and letter was done using chalk and board. The analytical process was helpful in associating the letters with the sounds. As adults, the women were able to grasp meaning in abstract symbols.

To make the process more interesting, the whole group was broken into three small groups. Each group was provided with a set of plastic alphabets. A recognition exercise was conducted to let people recognize and read the letters just learned. Then once the learners were ready to recognize the letters, an exercise to understand the use of vowel was planned with the consonants. This was done dramatically because vowels do create interesting changes in the consonant sounds! Later construction of new words was done through the learned letters. This was an interesting exercise, although for quite some time, people were unable to see its objective. Once it became clear, however, it was an enjoyable exercise.

Learning to write letters and numbers

Learning to write began after two days, and we started with learning to write numbers. We found that all the women conceptually knew numbers up to 10. Some of them knew up to 30 though they had not gone to school. This knowledge helped us to organize our teaching in numeric. The task was to let them recognize the shapes of the numbers with their place (sequence) value. Once this recognition was done, all we needed to do was to teach them how to write the numbers.

In teaching writing, we wanted first to help them to control digital muscles, as most of them may not have used a pencil or pen before. Hence an exercise using the finger over big letters was done time and again along with memorization of the letters. We then broke each letter into recognizable shapes resembling something they knew. The same was done with numbers, e.g. a spade resembles the number '7,' or '1' resembles a staff. Similar exercises were done with all the nine numbers and 0. The same symbolic relations were made with the Devnagari script letters.

Other learning

Further learning of alphabets was done using the names of the participants and objects of daily use with which that they can easily associate. For example, using one women's name 'HARMI' we could teach the letters 'H', 'R', 'M'. Similarly in showing a Pen, we were able to teach 'P' and 'N'. This process helped us to create our own primer.

As we were working close to 10 hours a day, taking breaks for tea, lunch and rest, the approaches varied, working with the whole group working in small groups and working as individuals. Variety was the key idea. There were times when the memorization or practice of writing a letter 15 times was quite boring for women who are used to working mainly outdoors. To change the mood we made two / three visits to places of interest during the course. Such opportunities were needed to break the monotony of practice sessions. Similarly if we were reading as a whole group, then a small group activity followed, making new words or individual work in writing. We also used some educational games but without much result.

We were successful in making it a living and learning experience, because we found that the women took their own time to work together before sessions or in the night. The group was certainly intent upon learning. We also created a song related to vowels and consonants used, to help remember letters through shape as described in the song. This song was based on the tune of a local folk song. This song was later incorporated in the primer.

At the end of 10 days we were able to learn all alphabets and numbers up to 30. Writing was coming along slowly, but some developed good handwriting. This was a surprise. Two participants started reading slowly and writing their names and home address. The primer was enough to carry on with further work independently. As a follow-up, we talked about how to keep in touch even while working at home. We gave them self-addressed postcards. It was agreed that the women would try and read at least an hour a day and identify one person who could help them in times of difficulty. As the primer was developed with all the participants, the sequence was known to all so that even if the women forgot, she could figure out the letter through song, visual and sequence cues.

Follow-up

This first camp was a learning experience for the women as well as for myself. As a follow-up, we wrote letters in simple short sentences, and we did receive postcards from the women. Some were written by them, or they asked somebody to write and they copied it. The second camp was set up after one month. We met again for 5 days. The most interesting thing was that, with one exception, most of the participants had spent time studying, if not daily, then at least every two or three days. They had also sought help from someone, either a relative or other outsider. The emphasis in the second camp was to revise what was learned in reading, writing and numeric, and to learn numbers up to 100, and simple addition and subtraction. We also tried simple things such as home address, family tree, members of the women's group, as well as how to read the clock or watch. In this camp, we found that two women were way ahead of the others, and 50% were average and the other

50% were below average. We gave them new materials to read and planned another follow-up camp.

Since the second camp, we have started a system of correspondence sheets to review what they had learned. We have received these sheets back which is heartening; their interest is continuing. Now we are planning the third camp with a view to teaching how to use reading/writing/numeric in the tasks they need to perform as group leaders in relation to the post office, bank, Block office, etc. Keeping minutes of meetings, writing applications, and reading wage labor records will be used as course material. This phase should provide further solidification of the literacy and numeric skills.

What we learned

The course has provided some interesting insights in terms of planning, organizing and administering a literacy programme.

1. Poor people's struggle for survival makes it impossible for them to attend a regular literacy class in the evening in their villages. However, they have certain periods when they are relatively free. This provides the opportunity for crash literacy camps.
2. The literacy camp needs to be planned with people who are part of the programme. The place, time, duration need to be discussed with them and established, based on mutual convenience. This process reduces the anxiety of the teacher about their attendance.
3. One of the key problems of many literacy programmes - 'motivation to learn' - was not present among the participants at the crash camp. This was not only because they were partners in planning but also because they ware selected because they were leaders and part of the integrated development programme of Astha.
4. The concept of living and learning together was important as it created an atmosphere to learn. In most cases where there is no literate environment, going for a short period to attend a literacy class may not be conducive to learning. Also, being with others who were in a similar situation helped to create motivation. Mutual learning happens in a unplanned way.
5. The learning programme should be a well thought-out process keeping the adult learners background in mind, and developing teaching methods based on principles of adult learning.
6. We also realized that in this type of crash programme setting, there was a need for a creative and innovative teacher who could use things from the environment, rather than depending on prepared materials. (This may also be necessary

in other literacy classes, particularly where the language and the life situations are different from the prepared materials.)

7. The use of exercises and variety of experiences to provide practice is important, because the simple repetitive process of memorization is a boring task. Also, most of the village people are not used to sitting for long hours. Hence, there should be a variety in the learning tasks, involving them in different ways.
8. Even though there was generally high motivation to learn, there were times when many women had low motivation because of slow progress, or a fight on some personal issue, etc. At such periods, the role of the teacher was very crucial.
9. The duration of the camp should be long enough so that a significant self-learning process can be started. This is very important. Similarly, a follow-up should be built in because the women's daily lives do not automatically make room for literacy.
10. As most of the learners are alone without any support structure after they leave the camp, the suggestion of finding someone in the family or neighborhood to help them was useful. This prevented them from forgetting what they had learned. Similarly, to maintain contact with the teacher in whatever form (e.g. correspondence) was important.
11. It was important to have support trainers, not only to learn the methods, but to work in the small groups' reading and writing practice sessions. They also helped to develop the learning sessions more creatively. The camp is an intensive experience for all, and would be too much of an educational, emotional, planning, management load for one trainer along, although the number of learners may not be very large.

Conclusion

As the process is still continuing, the final shape will emerge in due course, but the effect to date confirms that such a crash course in the format of a camp is a viable learning programme in literacy. Recently there was a demand from male group leaders to start such a course for them. This makes us feel that this approach to literacy is a perceived need of the people of the area.

Amidst the jungle of the Simipal Hills

Satyabrata Barik

A story may have a moral, but a case-study does not, for it is a life situation which does not have a beginning, nor an end. It is an event, or a series of events, that go on happening. An effort to systematize the happenings is sometimes positive, sometimes not, sometimes even unexpectedly! An endeavour to develop the undeveloped must admit this phenomenon and help the struggle continue. I will tell of my experience with an Indian local village in the jungle of the Simipal Hills. Full of enthusiasm I had to roam over the area for a few months before I found this village and decided to do educational work in region where there is an overwhelming number of illiterates. To give the reader an impression I must mention that 83% of the population is illiterate and the majority are tribals. This village of Giribeda has 20 families belonging to Santal tribes. All of them are very poor, their sources of livelihood being agriculture and the forest. They don't think of education or schooling as playing a role in their survival.

A dream of better learning methods

Originally I thought of exploring the possibility of a better learning environment in school. But as I started the school, a different set of impressions drew my attention. The children did not have adequate clothes to wear. They were unclean and not well-cared for by their parents. Some children were suffering from different illnesses - fever, cold, scabies and other skin diseases. I found that they did not have sufficient food to eat every day. I realized that these conditions were not at all conducive to a healthy environment at school. And how could I dream of better learning methods when there are other alarming priorities?

But what could I do as a person, even as a representative of an organization? You can't supply clothes and food to the children for the indefinite future. The ideal is that the family conditions improve and children get better care. Should we then forget about education and do something else to enhance the economic standard of the people? Is it that easy?

My preoccupations and limitations kept me in school. I tried to create an easy atmosphere for the children, contrary to the discipline of the formal schools. I put more emphasis on fun than on memorizing the three R's, unlike many schools. It

was a year before they found some reason to be happy. The children seemed to have learned the three R's better than students in the neighboring government schools which ran very irregularly.

The roles of the parents and the community

The parents, armed with their old notions of powerful teachers and obedient pupils, started showering me with criticism. I felt it necessary to convince the parents that it would be better to teach through persuasion and enjoyment than by force. This was not the only reason I kept talking to the parents. It was clear that the whole community had to be involved in the educational process in both learning and management. First, unless the social setting and family conditions support what is taught in the school, all your efforts are a waste.

The stress must be on the children's education, because the children are the builders of the future, and building of the builders demands the foremost attention of the parents - as well as the teacher - and requires that some of the basic infrastructure be ready for their smooth learning. A village like Giribeda, lagging far behind the mainstream, lacks a schoolhouse. Funds available for educating children in such areas are quite inadequate, too little to have the necessary learning materials and to pay the teacher satisfactorily. These considerations will always require the community to be highly motivated to take the leading role in managing the school.

A shade above their head

The people of Giribeda understand that the children need a school house, providing enough space for reading, playing and keeping their study materials. But they continued to delay the construction of the house, despite persuasion from me and my associates. At last when a house was built (a straw-thatched roof standing on wooden polls) we had to contribute something in cash. Now the children have shade above their head, even though there are no walls, no flooring.

The house was constructed on the land of a person who promised to donate the school to the village. We thought the school could be better secured if a fund was created. The fund could also be developed using income from forest trees. Pits were dug around the house, cow dung and garbage were put into them and coconut seedlings were planted with care. But one day the landowner stopped the children from putting fencing around the plants saying it was his land and that he only promised to donate the piece of land on which the house stands, not beyond 5 feet away. He did not, however, intend to appropriate the coconut plants. I was shocked.

I decided to leave the matter to the villagers. Though I had spent money on behalf of the institution in purchasing the seedlings and paying for labor the villagers also put their labor into this project. My position was that the whole property was theirs and they should decide what they wanted to do. They did not do anything except to throw some insults at the landowner. He also did nothing with the plants on which the goats grazed everyday.

The end of the story

I stopped going to the village thinking that all my caring had gone unappreciated. The villagers, busy as usual in their work, remained silent. The school has been operating, however, and the teacher has recently changed. I don't want to completely withdraw from the village. We invited the children to a festival and poetry reading ceremony held recently. I am in anguish only because the people are not playing their part fairly, which is an indispensable part of any development process.

The income project on education

R. Kumar

Under the official Innovative Education programme, supported by the government of India, we are working with 10 villages in the Mayurbhanj District in the state of Orissa, India. Though we have also good contact with people in five more villages. The needs to take up economic activities in a few villages have well been perceived but difficulty in pulling required finances has not allowed us to progress in that direction. Nevertheless, the ongoing education programme specially designed for the tribal and backward children of the area covers many a dimension, though in its modest way, on the basis of the challenges thrown up by this backward block.

The following few features would show our educational effort as distinct from the normal nonformal schools as well as the government run primary schools as functioning in this area. The features worth mentioning are:

— each school has a school fund (in cash or kind);
— an income generating business attached to each school;
— involvement of parents and community members in both a learning process and the management of school;
— an inbuilt exercise of exploring and adopting an appropriate curriculum suitable to the tribals with an aim to emancipate them from agelong socio-economic imprisonment and suppression by the privileged elites.

The schools run for at least two to three years hours daily during day or evening or both according to the convenience of the children of the concerned villages. The teachers have been selected from the same villages and are trained and oriented from time to time in line with the proposed ideals. We, then go elaborating one by one to show how the whole programme has taken shape in the last two years.

Income, school and community

In view of the marginalized people living in the area, for whom economic sufficiency is hardly a reality, collective savings have been regarded as the only way out. This has been reflected in bringing up school funds through collective contribution and external aids. The people collect paddy, mohua flowers or sal seeds which are supplemented with cash by our organization, AGRAGAMEE. But gradually ways

and means are found to increase the funds at this stage, three out of ten villages have their cash position between Rupees 700 and Rupees 1000 and others below Rupees 300 as cash or grains.

The income projects attached to each school are worth consideration in relation to the raising of school funds. Three schools have been provided with goats, one school having two newborn kids. Another two schools are raising a few chickens. Yet another two schools have been encouraged to develop a fruit garden each. Last year four schools went in for cultivating sweet-root as a means to add to their funds. All these activities are in a growing stage and will take further care time to bear the intended results.

Funds raising or economic project, the school children are made to take a part in it and to draw a learning from the same. Some time they have been given seedlings to plant and take care of those planted. This is intended not only to impart them the skills of growing trees or animals by also to develop in them a sense of belongingness to the school and a growing younger group.

The parents and the community has had no less a role to play in this process. Besides having parents meeting in the respective villages, we also have a get-together of the school committee members of all villages. We had such a meeting in last October 1989 which was attended by 35 members from 9 villages. Discussions were held on specific problems relating to construction of school house, increasing the funds, ensuring the proper running of school with regular attendance of children and teacher. Throughout the discussions there was a feeling of dissatisfaction over the way every thing is going, so emphasis was being laid on closer participation by the people. A big question hung over our head was how to sustain the schools in cast the external support stops. Very few members responded positively suggesting to raise village funds enough to run the schools. This is indeed a real test before AGRAGAMEE for coming year.

Quality of education

It is more important to infuse quality into the schools than multiply their numbers. Quality is considered not in terms of academic ability alone, but in respect of making qualitative human being capable of determining the shape of their own society. There is a need to develop a sense of freedom and fearlessness, self-respect and confidence and of course a group feeling which is the only source of their strength. We are in search of a course of study which would give power to the powerless and dominated as the tribals of this region are.

Very recently in the first week of March we had a children's festival attended and enjoyed by nearly 120 children who participated in a number of games and sports and cultural competitions. Though the winners were awarded prizes, the

occasion was fully rejoiced by all. We wish we could organize similar events for children oftener to give them a sense of self-importance along with pleasure!

On the academic side, a second round assessment is due by now. The first assessment conducted a year ago in April 1989 showed that only 24 out of 210 assessed children were found able to read, write and do math. Out of 96 girls assessed, only 5 could attain these abilities. Overall result showed the girls lagging behind. Majority of children are in the learning stage.

Awareness generation

Besides the school programme, many other problems of the villages have demanded their solution. At the moment our role has been confined to mobilize and educate the people to find their solution themselves. Having regular meetings and informal talks with the villagers on different issues have generated consciousness against exploitation, cheating and domination by the contractors and other illintentioned elites. Preservation of forests and environment in this region has been another part of our campaign. Shouting in the name of environment has become a new fashion among the officials as well as the elites. But we held both the forest officials as well as the local people responsible for destroying the forests, the former being more responsible for encouraging illegal felling whereas the poor tribals and others have taken cutting as a survival means. AGRAGAMEE has however maintained its efforts to educate each village to protect their own forests for their own benefit. We have also tried to raise this consciousness among children through posters and magazine.

Literacy in rural areas: TRICON Associates

S. Banerjee

At TRICON Associates, India, we are a group of people who have been involved over the past two decades in Development Studies, Development Action Research, Contemplation of development perspectives, and also in specific interventions. Our basic objective is to use this experience to:

— further elaborate on holistic development strategies;
— become involved in specific interventionist activities;
— share our experience and insights with others.

At present eleven of us work full time while another three work part time. At the moment among other things we are also involved in preparing material for use in adult education.

The role of education and literacy

Education for us is more than a project. It is an involvement in a cognitive process of acquainting, acquiring and articulating social knowledge. As a corollary it is a praxis of recognizing social reality and initiating social action. In our society marked by oppression, distorted under tiers of orthodoxy, hypocrisy and brutal control, education has become a tool in the hands of those in power to consolidate their authority by systematically distorting and even eliminating the most vital creative urges, the identities of the vast majorities of people.

Alternative education has to resist this. To be effective it has to become a movement wherein we start recognizing the true nature of the social milieu in which we live and as an upshot enables us to assert and liberate ourselves from the path of anomie, atomism and alienation that is the destiny of this society.

Given such a perspective, literacy becomes an instrument, albeit important, one must hasten to add. Consequently, while we involve ourselves in producing material for use in literacy campaigns, our overall focus is on initiating and chronicling alternatives to the present society, to the present system of education etc.

Intervention strategies

At present our educational activities are associated with a few other groups working mostly in rural areas. The intervention strategies of these groups vary. While one common factor is that all of us have spent a considerable amount of time in the area in terms of strategy, some are biased towards developmental and economic activities, while others are more keen on organization building etc. However, for all of us education remains a process of social analysis and social action. Since the content of such an education is constantly evolving in a local and specific way, albeit with a macro perspective, the endeavour needs constant research, evaluation and reorientation.

For alternatives to be meaningful, it has to emerge from within the social milieu. Specifically it has to relate to past social experiences. Literacy by helping chronicle these past social experiences, and by making available the experiences of the larger society, can expedite the search for alternatives. But this process is not easy. Let me enumerate a few of our problems:

— a major area of conflict is with the ideology of those in power and the modes of education propagated by them. Given their stranglehold on information and communication systems, their constant efforts to justify themselves, this antagonism is generally subtle and all-encompassing;
— secondly we have to contend with our own social biases, a result of our own social backgrounds, so-called education etc. All of these in turn affect what we teach, how we teach, priorities etc. And just beyond this is the business of achievement rather than success;
— another problem is generated by our tendency to compartmentalize involvement into issues; for instance into development, literacy, environment, women etc. This project syndrome can be debilitating;
— fourth is the constant preoccupation with the 'frontier issue' or derogatorily put the 'in issue';
— in the Indian context a major issue is language, not to mention the numerous scripts and even more numerous dialects;
— and then there is poverty and its twin, apathy.

The adult education programme

In the adult education programme we are involved in producing three booklets of education and training material. These are being produced in association with a number of groups. Since these groups are already involved in literacy and education, and our material will be towards further consolidation, the material will reflect regional specificities, group aspirations etc. Accordingly, while TRICON will

concentrate on methodology, form, approaches to education etc., the group will provide the content in terms of case studies, experiences etc.:

— the first set will be for youth of the age group from ten to twenty. These rural youth, both boys and girls, must work as hard as the adults. But, since they stay with their families, they have relatively fewer personal obligations and responsibilities, and are therefore more inclined to want to become literate. As such the study material will try to make a proper blend of social analysis and the capacity to read and write. (The age is flexible at both ends);

— the second set of material will be for people above twenty. Accepting the fact that this group might be skeptical about the usefulness of literacy and would be more concerned with 'what to do,' the material will be information-oriented. The primary focus will be to help people articulate their social interests. Literacy will have to follow;

— a third set of material will be for the activists/trainers/ interlocutors of this process of education.

Literacy in Zimbabwe

Problems and limitations

Ignatius Chombo

Zimbabwe is a young developing country which became independent ten years ago. The majority of these people are either illiterate or semi-literate. It is conservatively estimated that the number of illiterates exceeds two million. These people are generally found in rural areas, and women are over-represented. The previous governments did not accord black many opportunities for education and economic development. Those who acquired some education did so under very difficult conditions. Soon after majority rule in 1961, all forms of education were given priority as a way of redressing the inequalities that had existed during the reign of previous colonial governments. The new government saw education as a way/tool to assist people to accomplish things that they could not do before.

Since out government subscribed to the principle that education is a Human Right that all citizens regardless of sex and age should not be deprived of, it embarked on an ambitious programme to make education accessible to sectors of the population that initially did not have access to education. The governments efforts fell short of desired goals and expectations due to limited financial resources available to it. One of the major areas of education that was affected by this shortage was the literacy sector. This is the sector composed primarily of rural women. NGO's came in to offer some assistance. They had recognized that it was through the literacy programme that the low socio-economic members of our young nation could raise their standards of living and general welfare and well-being.

The Zimbabwian literacy programme is based on humanistic principles and has as its purpose, the liberation of man from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency. Literacy increases a person's control over themselves, their lives and their environment.

The role of the Adult Literacy Organization Zimbabwe

Literacy was for a long time championed by the Adult Literacy Organization Zimbabwe (ALOZ). We supported the humanistic ideas on literacy and we tried to develop its own approach towards these ideas by: using existing organizations,

training one individual in a group (cooperative) to be a literacy teacher and by providing booklets to participants.

The main problem for ALOZ is its limited staff due to limited funding. Therefore, we were stretched to our limits due to the increased numbers joining literacy classes. The Humanistic Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS), which is involved in development oriental programmes, helped us with much needed funds. HIVOS's humanistic philosophy neighbour's problem is not this alone, its collective, all who can help are expected to make a contribution in their own way.

The sponsorship has enabled the poorest of our people especially the rural communities, farm laborers, the domestic workers etc. to achieve a significant predominantly women to read simple recipes; - this helped them improve on the nutrition of their family; and cut down diseases. They were able to read, write, count money and check for correct change from the shops. These skills occurred at literacy classes have greatly cut down on infant mortality in that mothers know when their children should be vaccinated. All the skills discussed above have significant boosted self-confidence on a lot of people from out low socio-economic groups.

Illiterates in Zimbabwe

At independence, Zimbabwe's illiteracy rate in rural areas was over 55%. The illiteracy rate has since decreased significantly although more still needs to be done especially on rural women who are still lagging behind. Why are rural women in this pathetic position?

A major contributory factor lies in Zimbabwian men's cultural attitudes. Some men here believe that a women's job is to till lands, look after children and menage the home. The men assume the role of providers and dictator al heads of the households. Men were free to marry as many wives as they could and the more children they had the better the source of labor. These cultural habits are dying fast but not fast enough for the rural women to actively pursue self-improvement programmes such as literacy. A woman armed with literacy skills is armed to fight political, social and economic enslavement.

Moreover too many school-age children are not going to school and are illiterate. There is a compulsory and free education, but there is no enforcement of the regulation. Thus, a lot of children either do not go to school or drop out and eventually they become an illiterate group. Another factor is the pre-determined time frame to finish a given programme. Literacy participants have other responsibilities requiring them to accomplish certain literacy aspects within a given time frame. This becomes an obstacle when their other social responsibilities are not taken into consideration. This could include extended illnesses, death, etc. Death is an important aspect in the cultural life of a Zimbabwean.

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No community member or other relative can miss a funeral. Everybody must be there, no matter where they live, in order to perform appropriate relational functions. Usually it can mean that it takes about a week to get back to the normal routine. If you are in a programme which is to last six weeks, you are already a dropout, because you have missed a week of the programme.

Another factor that hindered literacy programmes in Zimbabwe in the last ten years is the voluntary aspects of literacy teaching. Teachers who are involved in providing literacy service do it voluntarily, they are not paid for their services. As such, very few people have both the skill and time to volunteer. This has resulted in unqualified personnel teaching literacy classes, as such, the programme suffered on quality.

It is important, therefore, that literacy programmes take these socio-cultural elements into consideration in designing and implementing these programmes. In order to redress the deficiencies discussed above, it is important to see which sectors of the community need literacy service the most and how our approach should be in order to be more effective.

New thoughts on literacy

In the colonial time settlers and colonial women required their housekeepers and nannies to at least speak English so that they could follow instructions and speak to the colonials' children in English. The churches encouraged literacy so as to increase the number of locals who could read the bible and other church literature and to sing the church hymns.

After the liberation gradually new thoughts emerged. The government subscribed to the principle that education is a Human Right that no citizen, regardless of gender and age, should be deprived of. It embarked on an ambitious programme to make education accessible to sectors of the population that initially did not have such access. The main aspects of these ideas are:

— literacy should be promoted as a tool for development;
— literacy should be promoted as a human right for all;
— literacy is a tool to promote culture;
— literacy is a tool to unite people;
— literacy is a tool to increase options.

In practice we have to be aware that these aims can be implemented only in a modest manner. In order to give you some understanding of the literacy work we have undertaken I will present one example.

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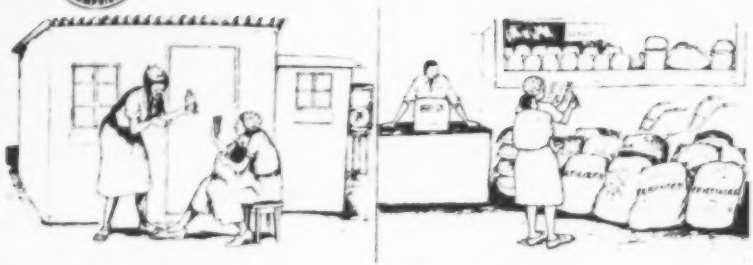
KUTI TIBUDIRIRE



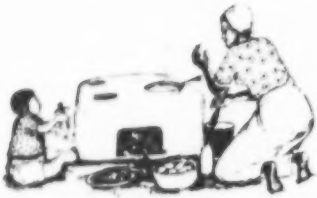
NGATIDZIDZEYI

Kuti Tibudirire = So that we can succeed
Ngatidzidzeyi = Let's learn
(Shona language)

The story tells that the mother is getting medicines from the clinic. She proceeds to the farmers cooperative. She buys pesticides to treat the plants at home. She is unable to read. She gives the baby the pesticides and not the medicine. The question is: 'What will happen to the baby? The baby could die. The mother has realized that in this society you have to learn to read and write. So she joins a literacy group.

This picture is used to encourage women to enroll in a literacy course. In working with existing groups this picture has been used to incite women to take part in a literacy course. The drawings are distributed nationwide. They are used to promote discussions. There is no written material with the drawings except key terminology. People can create their own stories as long the message remains the same.

KUTI TIBUDIRIRE



NGATIDZIDZEYI

Future perspectives

In the literacy decade ahead of us Zimbabwe literacy programme should focus more on remote rural areas, domestic workers, mining communities and commercial farms compounds. No country can proudly boost of any economic success until and unless its disadvantaged are able to control their lives and environment. HIVOS, we hope will continue to offer financial assistance to organizations involved in literacy. The next decade is crucial in the eradication of illiteracy in our country. This is a challenge that cannot be won by government alone, it needs total effort from all concerned parties be the NGO government or business and industrial concerns.

English literacy

A unions' project in South Africa

Busi Mavuso

The English Literacy Project (ELP) offers literacy as a service to progressive trade unions. Literacy should be aimed at the development of workers, so that they are informed and active in the democratic movement. At least half the South African work force is forced into production without even primary school education. This is because of the needs of the apartheid economy, poverty and the lack of free, compulsory schooling for black people. Workers are locked into the endless cycle of exhausting, unskilled work. But they create the wealth that allows others in South Africa to become educated and in control of society's productive forces.

In this country the economy is run in English but the majority of workers cannot understand it well. One out of two workers are not functionally literate in English. Workers need education so that they can participate fully in the transformation of South Africa at the point of production. Management owes workers time off work for education classes. Adult education at the work place is a basic right for all workers.

The work of the English Literacy Project consists of the following activities:

1. We work through the progressive trade unions to set up learning groups at work places.
2. We research and write literacy materials for adult learners.
3. We print a literacy newspaper, called Ukukhanya (Active Voice).
4. We offer literacy teacher training to people drawn from the learner's own communities and organizations.

ELP is run along cooperative lines. Four coordinators are elected by the staff, annually. We raise our funds from overseas organizations who support education for change in South Africa, on the condition that there are no obligations on our part to them.

The work with unions

The English Literacy Project works with unions because it is also important for literacy to be directed towards a wider movement that is organizing for social change. Unions are grassroots democratic national organizations fighting for economic change in South Africa. Hence it is easier to work with people centralized in one place having common problems and shared experiences. It becomes easier to hold discussions and take action. For example, in one work place we were holding classes in a canteen.

Workers were reluctant to vacate the canteen so our classes were starting late. This problem was discussed in class, delegates were chosen to take up this issue with shop stewards and management. Someone from the group suggested that they ask for a certain room which was seldom used to be converted into a training room. Their case was accepted by management and within a month we had a beautiful training room.

The English Literacy Project started in 1983. Today we have 15 groups at 8 different work places in Johannesburg. These groups were set up with the help of shop stewards and organizers from progressive trade unions. They have invited us to worker's meetings so that we can talk about English literacy with the workers. Once the union decides to go ahead with classes at a particular work place, we jointly negotiate for facilities with management. The shop stewards then look to all the details of organizing the classes. Once the groups are in operation, ELP has gone to the shop stewards for help with any problems having to do, for example, with facilities, time, or misunderstandings with management. We also consult them about any work place or union issues that can usefully be discussed in the group.

Learners' Committee and Literacy Learning Groups

Through the structure of the Learners' Committees, which meet every two months we are accountable to our learners. The Learners' Committee is made up of one elected representative from each group. They meet once a month to discuss the running of groups, and to deal with any problems arising. Each class representative brings forward the needs and problems of their classes to the committee to be discussed, or makes demands about their lessons. ELP submits a report every two months to the Learners' Committees, detailing any changes in staff or the long-term plans of ELP, for their discussion. The committees also liaise with ELP. It also deals with matters from different classes and contributes to the newspaper 'Active Voice,' formally 'Ukukhanya,' meaning Light.

ELP also submits reports on the learning groups to the unions whenever the unions request them. The learning groups are forums for discussion. This en-

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courages the empowerment of workers by increasing their confidence in their own opinions and ideas. It is also a process of politicization because through discussion people exchange ideas and seek out further information to clarify their thoughts.

Through the development of literacy skills, workers also start to have confidence in their ability to control the urban, industrial environment. Groups meet twice a week at lunchtime or after work, in a changing room or canteen. The lessons last about 1-2 hours. Generally, together with the unions' help, we demand a half-hour off work, per lesson, from the management. Our classes are a mixture of men and women. Some are predominantly women with two or three men. Some are predominantly men with one woman or no women at all. Although we do not separate our classes we have learned through experience that it is better to have separate women's groups to discuss women's issues and problems. In one of my classes we were going through our newspaper and there was an article about cervical cancer. Women are very shy about talking in front of men.

Teaching methodology

In terms of the teaching methodology, learners are regarded with respect for their position as adults. The groups number is about 6-10 people and allows for full participation from each learner. There is a lot of emphasis on learners being active during the lesson - discussing, doing things, practicing new skills - rather than on the teacher 'lecturing'. This supports Paulo Freire's idea that education is not a one-way process of 'banking' information, but a dialectical and active process of growth and empowerment.

Learners participate in choosing what they want to learn, and regularly evaluate the lessons. It is crucial to encourage learners to be critical and evaluative, for their full empowerment. It is also important that they see literacy education as a service that is their right, not as a privilege 'bestowed' on them by paternalistic, well-meaning teachers.

A syllabus for a changing South Africa

There are no tests, exams or certificates since there is no set syllabus. But we are working towards establishing a syllabus for an alternative adult literacy programme, together with other literacy organizations and our learners. We hope this will become a model for post-apartheid adult literacy education in South Africa.

Good materials are an important aid in order to define a syllabus. Moreover they should meet the needs of the people. Therefore, it is important to discuss and negotiate with the people concerned. They should also equip people with skills they

need to cope with every day life i.e., reading and writing. Empower people, raise political awareness so that learners participate more fully in their union and mass democratic movements.

The staff teaches, writes materials, produces a newspaper and workbooks. Writers and teachers of the material are also involved in contributing ideas so as to reflect students' demands and opinions. Students write stories about their lives and hostel life which were compiled into booklets; we also produced a 1990 Calendar and a World Literacy Year booklet. Such booklets are powerful tools in our classes because they were produced and written by learners through the learners Committee, as the learners' Contribution to the Literacy Year.

ELP has put out 4 Workbooks so far, but production of these was stopped in 1986. At first we taught only English reading and writing. Learners found this too restricted. They asked for general education, including current affairs, political topics and numeracy. So we are now reworking our books according to feedback from teachers and learners so that they suit the learners' needs and demands. When they are in draft form we will submit them to the union Education Committees for approval and discussion of any additions they want to make. We are also working on information booklets on issues and topics demanded by learners, which include experiences and opinions of the learners, so that workers all over the country can read about each others' lives and increase their sense of solidarity with other workers. The ELP newspaper Ukukhanya comes out 4 times a year. It carries information about workers lives and struggles, at literacy level. It also carries learners stories, and interviews and discussions in learning groups, so that people learn that they can also make the news. Some newspaper articles end up as booklets. Our first draft book, entitled 'Talking About Your Life,' encourages and stimulates discussion. This resulted in people demanding more information on other issues like housing, cervical cancer, dangers of skin lightening creams, political data etc.

In other words, there is a lot of intercommunication and feedback between materials writers, teachers and learners. In this way we try to avoid the usual division of labor between materials writers and teachers. We are also dictated to by our learners.

Cooperation with other literacy organizations

We meet once a month with the other alternative literacy organizations in Johannesburg, LEARN AND TEACH and USWE, to discuss our materials and training courses. At the moment we are working towards a common training course and interchangeable literacy materials. We are also responsible to the alternative literacy projects in the rest of South Africa through the National Conference of Alternative Literacy Organizations.

We don't have regular contacts with formal education, since we are not registered with the Department of Education and Training. We don't want to be under their political control. We also don't want to teach their syllabus or participate in their exam system because it would mean that our learners would have to go back to feeling like primary school pupils. In our view this is education for domestication; it is neither adult nor liberating.

The literacy work of CEPROD

Delia Galindo and Laura Barahona

The adult literacy project forms part of the cooperative production, adult education and community health programme, carried out in the reformed sector of the Yoro-Atlantida Region, and consists of the following projects: adult literacy, productive participation of women, community health and cooperative aid.

The linkage to the Development Studies and Promotion Center's (CEPROD) projects takes various forms:
— developing definitions of curriculum contents;
— training of peasants in workshops and seminars, carried out by literacy monitors;
— addressing the issue of illiteracy as part of the training content of the workshops and seminars.

CEPROD offers to a number of men and women already familiarized with written culture. CEPROD's Technical Team deals with the issue of illiteracy through systematic planning and communication among its members. It does not produce its own literacy teaching aids (first readers and manuals). These are purchased instead from the literacy project executed by the Central National de Trabajadores del Campo (National Union of Rural Workers, CNTC).

Purposes of the project

Our contribution to literacy is in training monitors to teach reading and writing. We also provide supervision and follow-up of the activities literacy monitors carry out on a daily basis. There are five levels of monitor training, which cover the following areas: methodology and pedagogical elements for adults, community health, national reality, planning and participation techniques and popular education. These levels are reached progressively.

Our aim is that participants in the literacy programme acquire a greater critical perspective of reality, leading them to question and propose new strategies that allow development of a stronger organizational capacity among the different groups in the sector, in order to find solutions that can be implemented. This can hardly be achieved if the level of awareness among the different sectors involved is not raised.

Another purpose of the project is to contribute to the discovery and formation of leaders among the participants; leaders who will have a deep knowledge of Honduran reality, and can thus guide their organizations as to the roles they can fulfill within their own groups and communities, as well as on an national scale. This will raise awareness of the fact that literacy is a right to which every human being is entitled, and that it also signifies greater social and political development for the whole country.

Experiences and problems

Some problems have cropped up during the project's execution, both of a foreseeable and an unforeseeable nature, out of the control of the technical team and CEPROD, such as: floods causing crop loss among peasant groups, a faulty vision in participants older than 37 years, and a lack of financing for the project.

These problems have influenced the fact that the technical team is not only devoted to this project, but must also deal with the other programmes, like cooperative aid, productive participation of women and community health. Other problems we have also faced are: participant desertion at planting and harvesting seasons or during floods, desertion of female participants due to lack of child care facilities, and illness among adults and children.

Effects of the courses

The aim of the project remains valid because it responds to the problems that organized groups must face internally. Among the most significant effects to be noted is the demand for increased coverage to new groups and communities, made by: HONDUPALMA,* Empresa de Transformacion y Servicio Guaymas, Independent organized groups, and the Catholic Church in the Urraco Community

The monitors' search for a strategy to meet the health requirements of the communities that were most marginalized from the regular health services offered by the state, became embodied in the creation of three health posts, which are now run by monitors and women from organized groups. The team is composed of 33 peasant literacy monitors. There have a low desertion rate, approximately 10%.

* Name of enterprise that extracts African palm oil.

The target group, materials and motivation

The target group of our literacy Project is peasant men and women belonging to different organizations such as: cooperatives of agricultural production, associative enterprises of agricultural production and commercialization, groups of peasant women, groups of youths, and community patronates* .

The Literacy Project did not emerge from a clear institutional initiative, but as a result of demands made by organized groups from the Yoro Atlantida region, who requested that the Institution consider rural illiteracy as one of the most serious problems their organizations face. This premise was confirmed through a diagnosis made by CEPROD.

The project has not raised specific issues on its own, since the teaching aids utilized respond to the organizational and cultural configurations of the interested groups. These teaching aids are made drawing upon rural perspectives. The following adjustments have been made regarding use of teaching aids: one reader for every four participants is used, the training workshops for participants have been reduced in number, new personnel have not been engaged to join the technical team due to a shortage of funds.

The places where the project operates are accessible, but very distant from one another. This complicates the supervision and follow-up, since we do not have available vehicles that facilitate the displacement of the technical team. The main incentives for participation in the Literacy Program are: to get a Certificate of Studies recognized by the State, and to obtain and reinforce know-how of organizational aspects allowing participants to share in decision-making, and to benefit from the courses offered in health and mathematics.

Levels of learning

The literacy project is not a campaign; it is a project based on four levels of learning, lasting four years. The levels are:

First year	literacy level I
Second year	literacy level II
Third year	literacy level III
Fourth year	literacy level IV

* A patronate is the traditional representative rural committee.

This Project is equivalent in the official educational structure to the accelerated adult primary studies offered by the State of Honduras. The teaching aids used are produced by the CNTC's Technical Literacy Team, and are geared to the peasants. They are based on the needs discovered among the membership. These teaching aids include:

— first level: First readers for reading and writing, organization, and mathematics;
— second post literacy level: Organization, community health, and mathematics;
— third post-literacy level: Organization, agricultural techniques, and national reality;
— fourth post-literacy level: National reality, agrarian reform, and mathematics.

Working sessions (classes) are under the direction of peasant monitors selected from their own ranks, and members determine selection criteria according to the ability to read and write, the desire to serve their group and their community, their respect for adults, their popularity and acceptance from other group and community members, and their willingness to undertake additional training.

Promotion is carried out jointly by peasant monitors and members of the Adult Literacy Technical Team. It is undertaken by means of home visits, visits to

organized groups, meetings with group leaders, megaphones, posters, and literacy participants meeting with participants from other groups.

Working sessions (classes) are held in state schools, private homes, and in cooperatives. Working sessions (classes) are conducted according to participants' time availability, and it is the participants who decide when they should be held. Working sessions take place from Monday to Friday between February and July, and are followed by a reinforcement process of one weekly working session.

Working groups are composed of twenty-five participants. Among those attending classes and not taking an active part are the people suffering from vision and hearing problems, motor or mental impairment. Participants are between the ages of fifteen and sixty.

Technical training for women

The work of INCATEM

Emilse Escobar

Our schools, which are located in Bolivia, are called INCATEM (Institute of Technical Training for Women). They are devoted to an integral upgrading of women, in particular lower-income bracket women. The schools, within an organic structure, have technical and complementary subjects such as social orientation, health, arithmetic and literacy. The latter became a fundamental part of our work, because we realized there were both absolute and functional illiterates among our participants, and this forces us to include literacy in our regular curriculum.

Objectives

INCATEM links literacy to technical materials that do not require reading and writing skills, like for example, embroidering and weaving. The literacy work is carried out through the teaching of reading and writing based on the analyses and familiarity with the reality in which we live. The main objectives we pursue are the development of participants as individuals and their organization into productive centers or political, non-sectarian organizations.

The problems we encounter trying to reach these objectives are:
1. Teaching absolute and functional literacy simultaneously.
2. Irregular participation of the participants due to the multiple chores they have at home, which hinders continuity.

Over time we have had to readjust our literacy objectives, because we surpassed the mechanical level of teaching writing and reading, and we progressed into the field of popular education. The most important result of our work in literacy was that we succeeded in introducing a more participatory methodology, like the psycho-social one, which permits a better grasp of reality in order to better question and transform it.

We particularly wish to help women and people from lower-income brackets with our literacy activities. Our groups are heterogeneous, for example in Llallagua

we have peasant women, in El Alto most are women migrants from the countryside and the mines, and lastly in Cochabamba migrants from other provinces.

Target groups

We have chosen for women as our target groups, because they usually have less opportunity to attend schools and educational centers than men. A specific problem we encounter with this group is the lack of infrastructure in the motherhood centers, because they do not have classrooms, and classes have to be held out in the open. On the other hand there is also frequent absenteeism.

Nonetheless, the participants are motivated to take the course. They want to form part of the society in which they live, wanting to be able to help their children in their schoolwork, get training in technical skills like cutting and confection of clothing, food preparation etc.

The classes

In the schools classes are held three times a week. However, during extension work, such as in motherhood centers, they are held once a week due to the fact that the groups meet only once a week. The classes last one and a half hours, both in the schools and the motherhood centers. In each class or group we have about 10 to 15 participants. Most of the women are between 30 and 40, but there are also 25-year-old participants. Participants do often not take an active part in the class, first because they are afraid to talk in front of other people, and due to being unaccustomed to participating and using formal reasoning. They also have the idea that they should only passively receive information from promoters which prohibits active participation.

At first we only focused on reading and writing, but then we realized that we were not getting the results we expected, such as the women adopting a more critical outlook. Then we decided to change our teaching method to one which creates an incentive to participate, dialogue, and above all analysis of the different circumstances we were exposed to in our daily lives. We managed to combine teaching with discussion of topics dealing with our own national reality. This work has been carried out in motherhood centers as part of our extension activities.

The teaching

We have carried out some research to explore the women's experiences, evaluating the living conditions in which women of lower-income brackets must live. On the basis of this evaluation, we have adjusted our work. Now we use materials and experiences compiled by other institutions, devoted to teaching literacy, like SENALEP in Bolivia, and LUPE in the Dominican Republic. Until now we do not have post-literacy courses in our activities, but we are looking into how to go about finding support programs for it. The teaching aids we use were made by SENALEP - the National Service of Popular Literacy and Education - which is devoted to popular education.

Their contents are based on social, political and labor issues, which include topics with a focus on national reality, health, the family, women and the rights of the people. This material motivates us to think about making our own teaching materials in the future.

Those who are teaching the courses are popular promoters we have placed in each school, and they are the ones most directly involved in our activities. The women who benefit from this service are mainly mothers. We choose popular promoters taking into account their previous experience in this field, and also their participation in the training courses that the institutions sponsor. We hold the classes in school buildings and in the motherhood centers to which we have been assigned, and we also go to participants' homes. The classes are held between 18.30 and 19.30. In motherhood centers we start from 16.30 onwards, because that is when mothers gather there.

Literacy of women in Peru

Elisabeth Dasso

The main objectives of our literacy campaigns for women in Peru are: to plan, organize, promote and carry out research and/or action tasks geared to the integral development of women by means of assertiveness, leadership and organization, to promote women as agents of change in the development of society. The main work has been done so far by the organization PERU MUJER, Peruvian Women. Our members number a total of 45 (8 active members, 5 transitory members, 5 solidarity members, 7 staff members and 20 under contract).

Right now we are not carrying out specific literacy programs, because we are systematizing the experience accumulated during the past six years. We are doing this in order to launch a Programme of Literacy and Post-Literacy in Women's Civil Rights for which we are seeking funding. In this sense there is a temporary interruption of our literacy projects.

Our main activity is training for action, geared to qualifying women to take the roles of promoters within their own communities (promoters in legal services, home vegetable patches, child care and small-scale home industries). We contribute to the creation of women's organizations in communities where they don't exist, and we reinforce already existing ones facilitating women's roles as agents of change and transformation. We have defined four main aspects for this objective, organized in these development areas: Women and Health, Women and Work, Women and Family, and Women and the Law. Literacy activities are carried out within the Women and Law area, because we have chosen to link literacy to post-literacy programmes in civil rights education, human rights, women's rights, family rights and children's rights.

We took part in the design and planning of training courses for literacy and post-literacy civil rights education. We have also trained literacy promoters, and prepared teaching aids for literacy sessions.

Objectives

Objectives of the Literacy and Post-Literacy Programmes are to contribute to the elimination of illiteracy among women of popular sectors as part of communal

development, and to involve communities in the promotion and defense of women's civil liberties. We have come across the following in pursuing these objectives:

1. We faced very practical problems.
2. The objective was not modified.
3. We aspired to some important results of the Literacy Program.

In order to explain these points I will refer to experiences in two rural communities located in the jungle; the Catatachi community, that had some previous organizational experience, and the Third-of-October Community, with little previous experience. The problems that cropped up were dealt with during the course of the program, and gave way to changes in activities, for example, in the communities with higher illiteracy rates, women and men were included. Men took part in the sessions dealing with the promotion of women, and this gave way to changes in methodology. Considering practical obstacles, sessions were carried out in the evenings, because the communities were occupied with agricultural activities during the daytime. Literacy sessions thus became the main activity after dark, and this motivated other members of the community to attend the courses, which resulted in additional sessions being set up for the elderly and for the children accompanying their mothers.

Viewing literacy and post-literacy as a single process of education contributed to promoting participatory and continuing education among communities, which eventually led to the people taking charge of the teaching process. They took part in the production of teaching materials, helped organize communal libraries, joined in establishing reading groups, and organized debates, panels, and other events of general interest.

Learning about civil rights and duties, and reinforcing community-based organizations, offered great stimulation to the participation of peasant women in the workings of society, which helped prove that literacy is only one aspect of women's transformation as individuals and citizens.

Launching an integral Literacy Programme that had, as its starting point, the fact that women are subjects of the law with legal rights, and that there is a need for female assertiveness and for the feminine, cultural identity to be linked to communal development, helped change attitudes among women themselves, in the men, the town's authorities and the community as a whole. This is an important effect of the Literacy Programme.

Framework of activities: research and action

A social and methodological viability study was applied in four communities in the province of San Martin, with the objective of selecting two communities that offered

suitable conditions for the programme and where it would have a good acceptance rate. This study facilitated making a first diagnosis of the prevalence of illiteracy among peasant women, and testing out methodologies for literacy training. Afterwards participatory research was carried out in the chosen communities.

An executive team was chosen to conduct the research project among female and male community leaders, at communal general assemblies. Participatory research contributed to the contents of training, preparation of teaching materials, and communal development actions, among others. Post-literacy activities also form part of this programme. We have continued making teaching aids suitable for the areas in which we work, and with the contents most needed by women. In this sense we have also analyzed educational materials produced by other NGO's.

Teaching aids are geared to the Programme's participants. Some support self-teaching, others reinforce previous contents, others are recreative. Some are used during the course of the sessions, and some outside the sessions. There are also materials produced by participants themselves used in literacy training. The teaching aids developed by our team are tested out before they are printed. Contents and illustrations are produced during group dynamics between participants and the our team.

Concerning the topics discussed, we have: everything related to civic education (civil rights, constitutional rights, rights and conventions referring to women, children and the family), human rights, gender issues (sexual and social roles, relations between couples, violence in the home, participation, solidarity assertiveness), regional culture and idiosyncracies, cultural identity, communal organization and development. These topics determine contents for literacy and post-literacy courses.

The training programme among communities is undertaken by promoters who have previously been selected and trained. Training is both theoretical and practical, in order to choose the most suitable candidates. At first the literacy promoters are accompanied by a member of PERU MUJER when they start going out to do field work. This is considered necessary in order to assess, evaluate and guarantee the course's benefit. This we designate as follow-up. It becomes less intense as the promoters become more and more experienced.

The participants

Our target group consists of women in the countryside. These women are:

a. Women in the popular sectors (urban and rural) are our target group. In the San Martin area PERU MUJER had previously done work in the area of primary health education. The specific communities were chosen after socio-methodological viability studies were carried out.

b. Women who know how to write and sign their names, are able to help their children with their homework. These were the initial motivations, but as the program evolved the women became enthusiastic about learning more, and being able to write, read, create culture and defend their rights.

The participants are mostly between 20 and 30 years old. Classes, which we call sessions, are held on communal grounds; usually schools since sessions take place at night. Schools are conveniently located inside the communities. Our sessions take place from 7 to 10 in the evening, three times a week for three hours.

Each group is composed of 15 illiterate participants and 30 neo-literate participants. Shyness seems to be a main reason for lack of participation in the sessions at the beginning. Other reasons have to do with health problems linked to malnutrition and the more frequent illnesses, like tuberculosis, and parasites. Another reason is the fatigue experienced after working in the fields combined with domestic work. Most participants carry out a double burden working both in and outside the home. Because of this we use recreational material and group dynamics, among other participative techniques, to keep the motivation high during the sessions.

Conclusions

One of our main activities is participatory education, and organizing training workshops based on previous experience and interest in looking for new methodologies to approach adult education. At PERU MUJER we coordinate different projects dealing with women's work (sexual education, self-assertiveness, leadership, female associations, etc.). During the last six years we have devoted more of our time to the Literacy and Post-literacy Programme in Civic Education, and to the Program Legal Services.

The Literacy and Post-literacy in Civic Education Program has been sponsored by UNESCO's Regional Education Office for Latin America (Drealc Chile) for the last six years. The last thing we've been involved with is conceiving and producing a manual for making teaching aids for post-literacy and civil education programs for women, geared towards NGO's and the governments of the region. We have collected and analyzed over 500 materials produced in the region, which have been used to illustrate the manual. This activity was carried out at the request of UNESCO.

PART THREE

REQUIREMENTS

Supporting literacy for development

Leo F.B. Dubbeldam

During the Literacy Year with so many meetings in the field of education, much thought has again been given to literacy. Yet in looking back into the literature on literacy of the last few decades I sometimes get the awkward feeling that much, if not all, has been said about it before, and that much has been done in the field of literacy. And yet we are facing an ever-growing problem. It appears that many problems remain in the definition of literacy and on the conceptual and practical levels. There is no general agreement on the use and usefulness of literacy, though there seems to be some consensus about the disadvantages and dangers of illiteracy in our fast-changing societies.

There is also growing agreement among educators that more support, both financial and political, is needed for literacy work or more general basic education. At the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, certain international organizations promised more funds in the coming years for basic education. But this alone is not enough. The question is, can we convince other donor agencies, our governments or private organizations to contribute? Because if more is spent on basic education, it may mean less for other types of education, or other development sectors.

In order to come up with ideas and strategies on literacy, let us try to envision the place of literacy in human society. Our point of departure should then be to talk about human beings living in particular social settings. Like most living creatures, human beings communicate with each other in various ways. Without such communication no social life, characteristic of humanity, would be possible. There are various ways of communicating with others, which we use in different degrees and mixtures:

— one is body language; using particular movements, automatic reactions or intentional movements, we pass messages to each other;
— secondly people use sound to convey massages, whereby particularly structured sounds have developed into what we know as languages;
— thirdly we use man-made signs, images and graphs to communicate, using any material available and suitable for the purpose.

In order to understand each other people must learn the meaning and the use of these methods of communication. This process of learning starts immediately after birth. Any young child learns the movements, language, signs etc. used in the society in which s/he is born and grows up. The various methods are usually specific to a particular community. They form basic elements of what is called the culture of a particular society. Culture has been defined in many ways. I define 'culture' as 'The configuration of learned behavior and the results of behavior, whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society, in a continuous process of imitation and intended transfer as well as of adaptation and alterations as a result of its changing environment and its members 'creativity.'

Important elements of this definition for our purposes are that the elements of culture are shared by the members of a particular society, that they are transmitted to others, the youth or peers, and that the elements are subject to changes in the environment. But also that change is possible because of human creativity: individuals, holding current social values, norms and ideas, are able to develop new ideas. This can be done independently, or by rearranging existing knowledge and values and absorbing information and ideas from others.

Education, as a process of teaching and learning, can be seen as the major agent of the transfer of culture; of its values, norms, knowledge, skills, ways of thought and ideas. Education, in this sense, is a broad concept that reaches far beyond the walls of what we call the school. In the transfer of culture it uses all the means of communication available. Education at work can be conservative or innovative and stimulating.

One thing has to be kept in mind: all education is very much determined by the nature of the sub-culture of the learners concerned. One must be very careful therefore with general statements and prescriptions. To be effective, both content and methods have to be designed that are respectful of the learners' sub-culture. Only then can one decide what can or should be included for particular groups of learners. Which topics should be emphasized, how will the learning groups be composed (e.g. grouped by age, gender, social or tribal background) and what methods are to be used? The inability to take sub-cultural features and needs into account may well have been one of the reasons why earlier mass campaigns failed to have an impact.

The definition of culture also has a historical notion. A line from the past, through the present, to a future. Not only that a culture changes internally through time, but also that the cultural circles are expanding through increasing means of communication. For many centuries the world in which a person lived was first defined by the (extended) family and gradually expanded during the individual's lifetime to the community and sometimes to a wider scope. In situations where others in the

community were more or less within easy physical reach, oral communication proved to be adequate.

More and more people developed a relationship with an even wider context, such as a nation and even the world as a whole. This greater distance between an individual and his/her cultural circles had great influence on daily life. The body of knowledge grew fast, more frequent social contacts with outsiders had their impact on values and norms. Political and economic developments led to new forms of habitat. The means of communication were extended. In many places in the world a script developed that enabled people to communicate over longer distances, through time and without intermediaries. Sound and images found their extensions aided by radio, photo and film.

The school

More and more the education of the children moved from the family circle to the school, since the elders lacked the time and skills needed to teach them the growing body of skills and knowledge believed to be necessary in future society. At school, mastery of reading and writing was not only a subject. The school played an

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essential role in the relationship between the local community and the wider society of which it was a part. It is remarkable that formal school systems set up by governments have concentrated on children and youth. Education for adults is usually initiated by non-governmental organizations. A result of this is that the schools are more oriented towards the broader society and the nation, while adult education is more often directed towards the particular needs of people in a sub-cultural context.

For a long time literacy at the village or sub-cultural level was not really indispensable. As long as a person mastered the language and mental arithmetic, and was trained in a particular vocation so that he or she could participate in the social and economic life of a self-sufficient community, one could very well do without literacy. Especially with help from radio and stories told by the people, information about the outside world could be covered. Whenever necessary, fellow villagers could help.

Many people tend to look down on illiterate communities. But one should not underestimate 'oral cultures.' Many people master well-developed communication systems. The Kapauko people in the central highlands of West Iran had a dowry-based economy and a well-developed skill in mental arithmetics, which meant they had no problem entering the newly-introduced money-based economy. Rather than disregarding the capacities of illiterate communities, one should explore their potential and link educational programmes to it.

Basic education, and especially adult education, may be supported by more research in indigenous learning systems, the results of which might be used in teaching and literacy work.

Development

Developments all over the world have taken a turn in a direction that poses increasing difficulties. Population growth, which is excessive in some countries, has put new pressures on living conditions and employment. The economic situation in most developing countries looks grim, following the oil-crisis in the seventies and as a result of the debt problems of the 1980's.

Many school leavers do not find employment in the national economy and compete at the local level with those who did not go to school. Local communities are increasingly involved in national developments and have become more and more dependent on the national economic and political power structures. Information makes more frequent use of the written or printed word. For adequate participation in economic and political developments, the ability to read and write is gradually becoming a must.

The squeeze on government budgets and growing unemployment have their influence on Education. The educational system can not keep pace with population growth, but the means for maintaining standards are also lacking. Many children do not complete school. This is partly due to the deteriorating quality of education and because the motivation of parents and children is waning since the school does not automatically lead to employment. As a result, these children shortly join the ranks of illiterate adults.

The current lack of basic education both for children, youth and adults may have its consequences for future development. Participation in the international economy requires a skilled population. The time that unskilled labor could be a source of cheap labor on the international market and earn an income may be drawing to a close. It is in view of internal discrepancies and growing poverty, and in view of international competition, that efforts to improve basic education have to be stepped up immediately.

Priorities

Both school education and adult education are means to fight illiteracy and to educate people. It would be ideal if both could be improved simultaneously. The targets set during the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien included universal access to, and completion of, primary education by the year 2000. The adult illiteracy rate should also be decreased to about one-half of its 1990 level by the year 2000. What should the policy be when the means to achieve both these targets are not available?

The case of priority for development of primary schooling holds as an argument that schools have a good opportunity to offer children a complete package of subjects, including literacy and numeracy. If one is able to get all children into school, one has every good opportunity to teach the basics of new subjects nationwide. These subjects include environmental issues, health and hygiene, especially important in many countries because of the spread of various diseases, among which AIDS is currently one of the most virulent:

— the primary school educates the children for life in the national society. Given the fact that the national economy cannot absorb the school leavers, the curriculum has to be adjusted to local needs and capacities. This might be possible through decentralization of the system and by engaging more local expertise in teaching;
— furthermore, the primary school is a suitable place for co-education. Objections against co-education are believed to be fewer during the younger years than for teenagers and adults;

— in many countries it is easier to get children to meet at school during fixed times than adults, who are bound by their working hours;
— one may also expect that the impact of the literacy and numeracy lessons on the pupils might be more long-lived in primary school than in short adult courses;
— finally, if one is able to achieve universal primary schooling, the problem of adult illiteracy will be gradually phased out.

The priority given to adult education points to the immediate effects on employability and social participation. The curriculum can be formed more directly around current needs and existing capacities of the learners. Literacy can be taught as a subject, but also used as an instrument for other social and vocational objectives. The curriculum can be more effectively adapted to the sub-cultural environment. Education can serve more directly in the empowerment of the people.

The programmes can be selectively directed to those groups in the population that most need additional education. While such groups differ among countries, they may include women, urban or rural poor, cultural minorities, handicapped or others. The adults are also the parents of today. An increased level of education among adults should stimulate school results of the children. Finally, it is suggested that the costs of adult courses are lower and that the motivation of the learners is higher than in primary school.

The arguments pro and contra both can be augmented, I believe, and certainly the strength of the arguments will be different for each country or area. Yet we have to think about them seriously as we may need answers to the priority question soon.

There is one requirement common to both cases: there must be adequate follow-up to literacy once achieved. Here is a major point for support. Teaching youngsters or adults literacy does not automatically create a literate society. A habit must be formed. This is possible in those cases where people use literacy in their daily work. For many, however, other means for regular maintenance must be found. A reading environment has to be shaped, in the first place through availability of either useful or interesting literature; easy to read and attractive for people whose living conditions are difficult and hardly know what is meant by leisure time.

Reading materials in schools are likely to be different from adult reading materials; each has its own particular requirements. Yet there is a belief that, to a certain extent, school education and adult education could more frequently share facilities and materials. This may be another point for support.

Potential actors

Another issue we must consider is who will take the responsibility for the work to be done? Worldwide people look first to the government. As experience shows, many governments are not in a position financially to achieve universal primary education, and a significant decline in adult illiteracy by the year 2000. In many countries there are great shortcomings in primary education and most governments do not have the organization to take care of adult education. Therefore, others have to lend a helping hand.

At this point we must first consider a few political issues. Governments on the one hand are well-aware of their responsibility for the education system, but they also have many interests in other social and economic sectors. Political decisions are often taken on other than rational grounds. Power structures, whether based on economic, religious, ethnic, class or other grounds, will not easily promote forms of education that may sooner or later tackle their position. Specific actions, whether through primary school or adult education, that aim to improve the situation of underprivileged groups, may not be welcomed by the administration in power. Official adult education projects often have a political tag attached that is not in the interest of the community concerned.

Increasingly important becomes the relation between the nation-state and the various cultural groupings in the country. It is rare that national boundaries coincide with cultural boundaries. We saw this tension in the colonial empires, which led to the independence of many countries, but we still see the conflicts in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Soviet Union.

In addition, there is a growing number of refugees in the world, who are not likely to leave their new 'homes' soon. Educational provisions have to be made for them as well. Educators tend more and more to agree that early education has to use the local (sub)culture as its point of departure. Also for adult education, including literacy, the local sub-cultural needs and capacities should be the base for education. This leads to the suggestion that national governments may not always be the most effective institutions to implement adult education and literacy programmes.

What we may hope to expect from governments is that they review their priorities and actively work towards universal primary education. Secondly, that they promote literacy work as a regular element in their development projects. Furthermore, that they stimulate, or at least tolerate, educational activities for adults by non-governmental organizations and research into educational needs, methods and impact. Governments, in turn, may negotiate for better conditions on debt issues and financial support from the international community.

Governments and international organizations increasingly call upon the local community to contribute to educational provisions. This has been done in the past

and many communities have made great efforts. But their capacities are limited. Especially those communities that are most in need of educational facilities are the ones that can least afford to contribute financially or with labor.

The contribution of local communities can, therefore, not be much more than in the fields of their vocational expertise and cultural assets. Yet their capacities can be activated if there are non-governmental organizations that have their roots in local communities and sub-cultural groupings. This is because such non-governmental organizations may have close relations with and understanding of particular sub-cultures. As a result they may more effectively identify the educational needs of the target groups, discuss the proposed curriculum, call upon the creativity and ideas of the people, engage resource persons and provide material facilities.

The problem at this point is that in many countries, for political reasons, one finds a relatively low degree of social organization. In many countries organizations based on labor relations, religion, tribal identity and so forth are not tolerated by the ruling administration. This does not mean that they do not exist, but it is much more difficult for them to operate effectively and get formal support from outside than if they were formally recognized. In the Framework for Action from the Jomtien Conference, emphasis is placed on the potential of joint activities with non-governmental organizations on all levels. It remains to be seen if this recommendation will be followed up in practice.

Donor governments are in a relatively difficult position. In their bilateral relations with governments of developing countries they have limited opportunities for educational support.

Support is usually restricted to technical assistance. Gradually donor assistance to lower levels of education, as well as in the field of vocational education, is becoming acceptable. Direct support to non-governmental organizations in developing countries is more difficult. A way out seems to be support of international NGO's that are in a better position to assist local NGO's in developing countries. But it would help if donor governments would allocate more funds to basic education, both primary schooling and adult education.

International organizations are generally in the same position as national governments in the sense that they are tied to formal agreements according to government policies. Yet they may contribute fruitfully in many aspects that concern, for example, management, documentation, training programmes, logistical support, research and distribution of reading materials. The contribution of international organizations should be more in political action, information and financial support than in implementing campaigns themselves.

The Jomtien conference asked for 'New Alliances'. This holds for all types of basic education, including literacy, whether through primary school or adult programmes. Especially in the latter case, much creativity and cooperation is needed.

Nature of literacy

In the past decennia many definitions and interpretations of literacy have emerged. It always means the ability to read and write; often numeracy is included. It was first presented as an instrument that would lead to 'development', specifically in the economic sense.

Literacy was also seen as instrumental in relation to social and vocational aspects, which we called functional literacy. It was also seen as an instrument for political and social awareness. The conclusion is that literacy is more than a simple technique, it is an instrument of education in the process of transfer and development of culture. Literacy as a technique, or any technique for that matter, is useless without a purpose and a context. The essential question therefore is why people should be literate? Only after answering that question should one design a particular educational programme in which literacy is an essential element.

While thinking about basic education and, in that context, literacy, one gets the feeling that in the past too much has been done on the basis of assumptions such as 'it will be good for them' - or theoretical or ideological points of view held by outsiders. What has been neglected is proper research on identification of needs, evaluation of results and dissemination of experiences. What do we really know about learning processes, about the use of what is learned? What, if anything, is done by adult educators to record their experiences and make them available to others?

Areas of support

When thinking about specific areas of support for 'literacy' in developing countries, one might list the following items:

1. Support for primary school education, especially in terms of curriculum development and teacher training.
2. Curriculum development, facilities and equipment for adult education programmes in which literacy is an essential component, specifically aimed at educationally disadvantaged groups.
3. Research in teaching - learning systems and methods, both indigenous and newly introduced.

4. Research into the relation between oral communication and literature, and reading habits.
5. Shaping a literate culture through promotion of printing facilities, dissemination of information and stimulation of writers.
6. Strengthening of non-governmental organizations that are involved in educational programmes.
7. Development of government departments and activities that stimulate literacy programmes, preferably integrated into wider adult education and development programmes.

Limitations and problems of literacy work from a donor's point of view

Manuela Monteiro

When looking at literacy work in developing countries - and, I suppose, also in The Netherlands - one can distinguish between the policy level and the operational level particularly with respect to donor organizations like the Humanistic Institute for Development Cooperation (HIVOS) as well as other similar organizations. Under operational considerations, obviously the questions of efficiency and methodology come to the fore, and in this respect enough has been said already about the preconditions for successful literacy work: the need of follow-up exercises, the need to relate curriculum contents to the learner's daily reality, etc.

All this and much more has been stressed in the other contributions and therefore I will not dwell on that subject. What I would like to emphasize are the policy aspects which are of particular relevance to a donor organization. Here, the focus will be on the work of HIVOS without the exclusion of other donor organizations. I am afraid that I must often disappoint all those who see literacy as something very special, requiring specific policy. As far as I am concerned, literacy is not seen differently from any other activity or sector falling within the priorities of donor organizations. It is therefore necessary to look at general policies and the assumptions behind them.

Powerlessness

When dealing with the question of poverty and marginalization of large sections of society in the South, we see a clear correlation with powerlessness. That is, the inability of the poor to operate in a world which functions on the basis of rules and values which are primarily alien to the cosmos and world vision of the poor. This is particularly the case with respect to the distinction between modern and traditional in developing societies; a distinction which has been much criticized by progressive students but which is there, whether we like it or not.

So, in our analysis, in order to overcome marginalization it is essential that the poor learn the 'rules of the game.' How does the market operate, where are the decisions taken that affect my life as a peasant or a slum dweller, where can I get the resources I need to make a living? etc. The rules are many and varied and often

unfair. Only by learning them and playing the 'game' can the poor create change from within. Because from the moment you play, it becomes another game. In a nutshell, what we are talking about is access to power, the essence of our policy. Literacy - like other skills - is an important instrument in this process of learning how to operate in the modern, dominant setting. And that is why a donor organization like HIVOS allocates a substantial part of its funds to this sector.

The institutional approach

A second element in our policy is the institutional approach. This means that great importance is attached to the institutional setting in which a certain activity takes place. So the next question is: what do we consider the most appropriate institutional background for literacy work? When we listen carefully, we hear about literacy work as part of an overall community approach: a bit of health care, a bit of income generation, a bit of literacy, all implemented by generalists development NGO's (non-governmental organizations). But we also know about the specialists' approach: it is pursued by NGO's that specialize in a specific item (e.g. literacy) and therefore deliver technical quality.

Obviously the choice of approach depends on the context in which one is operating, but one can wonder whether there is much point in creating artificial situations in which an NGO brings it all to the people. We sometimes refer to it, somewhat disrespectfully, as the 'tutti frutti package'. After all, the outside world is differentiated, and quality is imperative!

But more importantly from our point of view is that literacy in and of itself is not enough. It is relevant if it is part of a strategy to enable people to become full participants in their own society. We have a firm belief in the need and effectiveness of people's organizations - people organizing themselves around shared interests, to voice one's needs and demands as a group. I am talking here about shared interests of large sectors of the population - the peasant sector, the farm laborers, the Indians of the Amazon, etc. I am talking here about organizations which can have a real impact, like trade unions, cooperative federations, farmers' unions etc.

The scope of literacy

How does this relate to literacy? Given the above, we cannot see literacy in isolation, but as part of a structured process of organization. Literacy serves as a deliberate instrument in that process. That means that an NGO proposing a literacy programme to be funded by a donor organization will be asked the same questions we always ask: what is the long-term philosophy behind their work, and how do they relate to

other NGO's and mass organizations? Are they integrating into a larger process of emancipation or are they concentrating exclusively on the here and now, at the community level?

In a sense this brings us to the question of the chicken and the egg. Which comes first? In some cases it is possible that one will start with literacy work, around which people will later organize themselves. However, as far as we are concerned, the superior form of literacy work, just as with other forms of service rendering, is one in which the organization providing the service, whether it be literacy or something else, responds to the needs and requests of the organized interest group. And we have seen examples of this during the conference - we only have to mention ELP's work in South Africa responding to women's needs in the trade unions, ALOZ's work in Zimbabwe responding to the literacy needs of the cooperative movement, or CEPROD's work in Honduras responding to the farmers' organizations.

Of course, there will always be variations on the above. They are often necessary. They will be all right as long as we don't lose the ultimate aim - and that goes beyond literacy.

Limitations and problems for literacy campaigns with respect to support and prerequisites for support

Jan de Vries

Within the context of the Literacy Year I would like to put forward just a few statements regarding limitations for support of literacy campaigns in the Netherlands. First there are the limitations of the educational structure. There is the gap between the educational system for youngsters and that for adults.

Despite our government's interest in adult education, and its contributions to promote a better system, there still exists a more or less general tendency to understand adult education in terms of the formal system for youngsters. That formal system is more or less the frame of reference for many policy-makers, and for our colleagues in that formal system. That seems to be a rather arrogant position, ignoring the fact that the formal system still produces a lot of people who, after a few years, have become functionally illiterate.

Illiteracy in the Netherlands

The main reason there are so many illiterates in our country is the incapability of the formal system. Recent research proved that 40 to 50% of pupils at the end of elementary school did not fulfill the standards for writing. In my opinion this is caused, among other things, by two errors within that system:
— the educational content is derived from an abstract world, from abstract goals;
— their methods are designed for 'the average' student.

When we want to fight against illiteracy in our country we must first of all fight the arrogance and the other failures of the primary education system. This cannot be done by designing methods and materials only at a national level.

Support for literacy

In the Netherlands we have a support system on a national and regional level that costs the government over 200 million guilders. A real expert model. And yet with the above-mentioned results! It is our experience, as supporters of adult education,

that there is no 'average' student and that, therefore, contents and materials must be developed as close as possible to those students. Curriculum development must, to a large extent, take place within the schools. That is the more or less successful formula within adult education, and that ought to be the policy for the support-system for elementary and secondary schools.

When our motive in making people literate is to enable them all to participate as full members of this society, then we must recognize that we have very limited tools. This applies to teachers as well as supporters, but mostly, of course, for those outside supporters. Education is primarily the teaching of techniques and skills. We can try to relate them to functionality; to do that is a precondition for success.

Conclusion

To realize this, in our curriculum, and in our teaching process, we are facing a dilemma: must functionality be defined by the government, by the teachers and supporters/scientists or by the students. For instance, are we teaching an Arabic-speaking Moroccan Dutch because the government wants him to participate as part of the work force in the Netherlands, or are we going to make him literate in his own language and culture.

I am not as convinced as I once was that the goals of the students are so different from the goals of the government. And I doubt that the teachers and experts are so prejudiced by their own opinions that they will be prevented from developing the right approaches, the effective contents and methods.

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Education for All

G.J. Storm; A. v.d. Zwaart-de Gast; R.A.E. Goezinne-Zijlman;
G.J. Leibbrant; A. Chetley

The situation in developing countries has deteriorated dramatically in the field of education. Prospect for improvement are bleak. Basic learning needs is a necessary concept to draw the attention of policy makers to the issue of Education for All. This concept, however, is not operational: One needs to focus attention on literacy, formal and / or non-formal education in order to attain the objectives of Education for All.

The Netherlands government has always taken an interest in education for development. The initiative of Education for All enhances the importance of the issue of education for development for the years to come: in many countries structural adjustment leads to a serious deterioration in the social sectors; structural transformation may lead to a more positive approach of educational issues. In this respect decision-makers will have to be influenced by the initiative on Education for All.

Decision-making is first and for all a matter for the developing countries concerned, not only their governments, but organizations at all levels in these countries. In this respect the issue of the role of NGO's is very important. The issue of financing was also mentioned, including the possibility of reducing military expenditure. It implies that a dialogue is needed both within the developing countries and internationally.

The aspect of women and development had been stressed by the Netherlands during the preparatory meetings; in the conference in Thailand some success was achieved concerning this issue. The question of development education in the Netherlands, as an example for other countries to follow, did however not meet with any interest during the conference in Thailand.

Some economic aspects of primary schooling for all: In the Thailand conference a study was presented of the total additional costs involved in achieving primary schooling for all children by the year 2000, for a group of countries denominated as most educationally disadvantaged: a group of 35 developing educationally disadvantaged countries: a group of 35 developing countries in a difficult educa-

tional situation. The analysis shows that in spite of cost reduction through better efficiency and effectiveness and in spite of a reduction in military expenditures, there would still remain an important financing gap in the order of 8 to 20 billion dollars for the period 1990 – 2000, to be financed by external support. If this amount of money could be made available the negative trend concerning educational expenditure in the total flow of concessional funds for development would be reversed slightly.

Rights

Every person in the world has the right to be given command of such knowledge skills and awareness as shall enable to take an active and independent part in society. For this universal right to be achieved an enormous amount of work will have to be done not only in less developed countries but also in the (highly) industrialized communities. We do need to recognize that throughout the world - 'there' and here, abroad and 'at home' - there are people who lack the fundamental skills and knowhow necessary for functioning in society.

It is no secret that in less developed countries only an elite is able to make the best or fullest use of education and other training facilities. Yet, among countries which have recorded high levels of economic growth in recent years (as in some Asian ones) the measure of illiteracy has risen in absolute numbers - by about 50 million - and reduction of illiteracy in relative terms has been to a lesser degree than the movement shown by general economic growth indicators. It would therefore seem that resources made newly available by economic growth are not being (sufficiently) directed to education and training.

Moreover, a little self-searching tells that in our own highly-industrialized country our education system is intrinsically so selective as to leave us, also contending with the existence of a large group who still have no command of the most basic skills.

Basis education is truly important for in no way and neither at national or international level can we afford this amount of under-utilization of Human Resources. It must not be allowed to come out worst from the tussle between social and economic priorities. By whatever means and in whatever area, the place of Basic Education needs to become confirmed and guaranteed by stated and effected policies.

The World Conference on Education for All

The World Conference on Education for All in Thailand (Jomtien) was on basic learning needs. This is a broader concept than literacy. It involves the knowledge and skills people need to play an independent and active role in society. This leads to my first point.

We have to distinguish within the concept of 'Education for All' - that the Conference was about - between tools, content and approaches. Tools are literacy and numeracy. But the Conference was also about content and approaches. As very important contents of learning were stressed environmental protection and early childhood care.

In particular the importance of Environmental Education should be underlined. It was stated that because of the urgency of the environmental problems of the world basic environmental education is probably more important than literacy. Environmental issues should be an integrated part of all education as a component of sustainable development, not just development.

One of the main questions was how to reach and whom to reach in the first place. Two thirds of the worlds 900 million illiterates are women. Because of their important role in early childhood care, health care and education it is of utmost importance to educate the women. This is not just a matter of emancipational ethics the nation, as a speaker said.

Many stressed that education for all should start form the culture of the learners involved and should combine indigenous and new knowledge and skills, to achieve a sense of ownership. I would say a combination of community development and education. Very little, however, was said about the culture of the millions in the slums of the big cities who probably for generation after generation will be caught in the trap of poverty and lack of education.

Concrete results

Cooperation between the organizing agencies, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and UNDP was important, since UNESCO is the specialized agency of the United Nations for education, culture and science. In the preparation of the conference 'Education for All' there were some doubts whether this cooperation between four, totally different international agencies, would succeed.

Concrete results, which came out, were the following:

1. Basic education is more than the traditional learning to read and write.
2. Basic education includes also adult education.
3. It is recognized that illiteracy is also a problem in developed countries.
4. It appears that methods are renewed and as well is the emphasis on distance education.
5. Emphasis is put on special groups, especially women and girls.
6. It is recognized that health, environment and human rights are important conditions for literacy.
7. It is also recognized that education ought to be a vital element in development policy.

The follow-up of Jomtien has to take the following points into account:

— more resources have to be found;
— the responsibility of the follow-up and the initiative lies with the local governments; they must act now;
— in the follow-up activities existing organizations should be involved; hence new organizations should not be created;
— the goal, that by the year 2000 illiteracy in the world will be half of that in 1990, is far more realistic than previous ones and there is a better chance that it will be reached;
— there is a necessity of making more resources available.

Conclusions

Out of the experiences of many initiatives in literacy work have come many lessons, but a key one is that the formal education system in many countries is simply not meeting the educational needs of most people, particularly those sectors of the population who face some form of economic, social, cultural or linguistic disadvantage. We have only to look at some of the appalling statistics of educational wastage - high drop-out rates, frequent repetition of classes, and a high degree of functional illiteracy and innummeracy even when attendance is ensured - for confirmation of this failure.

It has been evident for some time that new initiatives in the field of literacy are needed, that new approaches to education have to be developed and put into practice. And, if we accept that learning begins at birth, waiting until children find their way into primary school - which may well be underresourced, understaffed and overpopulated - is no solution. One of the major concerns with the World Conference on Education for All was to ensure that the message that there is indeed

life - and educational opportunity - before primary school became incorporated into the discussion and the subsequent documentation. Happily, that was achieved, and represents a very positive result.

Another crucial realization is that education is too important to be left only to governments and professional educators. Certainly, the rhetoric of the International Literacy Year and the World Conference on Education for All accepted this idea, albeit with a little reluctance. The ideas of 'new alliances', of new 'partnerships', where evident everywhere. The role of non-governmental organizations, many of whom have been working for many years supporting and developing alternative approaches to education and literacy, is recognized as a key force. Similarly, there is some acceptance that the 'consumer' of education - the children, their parents and the community in which they live - can and should also be involved in the 'production' of education. They have much to contribute. Parents and community members have skills, expertise and knowledge which can complement that of the professionals and can help to make the educational process more socially and culturally relevant, providing they are truly involved in both the planning and the implementation of the process.

More public awareness about the problem of illiteracy has been created by the public at large and by the participating governments. Loans for education has been doubled by the World Bank and so did UNDP and UNICEF. Ultimately, such initiatives can only be judged by what happens afterwards: if the ideals, even a few of the dreams, can be put into practice; if new approaches can be tried, adapted and refined; and if many more communities are mobilized towards a World Commitment to Education for All, then it will have been a success. Time will be the judge, and the hard work starts now.

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World without writing

and then ... they write for the first time

Robert Aspeslagh
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(eds.)

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The International Literacy Year of the United Nations, which was the inspiration for a 'World without writing', has come to an end. If the ideals, even a few of the dreams, which led to the International Literacy Year, can be put into practice; if new approaches can be tried, adapted and refined, then the efforts toward literacy can lead to results. Time will be the judge. The hard work starts now.

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